A CHAIN OF ERROR IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

M. V. HAY

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BY

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PREFACE

To explain why a book has been written, it is customary to frame a preface wherein the prospective reader may be warned of what is coming. Very often however the objective of a writer and his actual attainment are two different things; and perhaps in this case what I have tried to do may not have been accomplished.

The object of this book is to show by dissection and analysis the mentality and methods of English and Scottish historians generally in their treatment of a particular section of ecclesiastical history.

In the course of this demonstration the following points are discussed: (1) the stimulus to historical studies resulting from the Reformation; (2) the development of polemical history and the historical campaign against 'Popery'; (3) Gibbon as an ecclesiastical historian; (4) that, as a result of the blow struck by the Reformers at Humanism, historical studies in Scotland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries compare unfavourably with continental scholarship; and that consequently (5) Scottish historians during the nineteenth century still suffer from credulity and are lacking in the critical faculty.

In the last chapter evidence is given to show that the 'Chain of Error,' at all events in Scotland, is still unbroken. The Appendix contains a translation of the long letter written by St. Columbanus to Pope Boniface IV. No complete English text of this important document has hitherto been printed. I am indebted to competent friends who have helped me with my translations.

M. V. Hay.

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SOME LINKS IN THE CHAIN.

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FOXE, JOHN. 'Acts and Monuments.' (Known as 'The Book of Martyrs.') 1563.
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MACPHERSON, JAMES. 'Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland.' (3rd ed.) 1773.
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A CHAIN OF ERROR IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA IN BRITISH HISTORY

The Centuriators of Magdeburg—Baronius and his Annals—Bossuet and Gibbon—Gibbon and his 'guides.'

No revolution has ever been accomplished by theological arguments. The opening battles of the sixteenth-century conflict were conducted along the old lines of controversy based on Scriptural and dogmatic discussions which did not at first awaken interest outside a narrow circle. A programme merely dialectical could never, on its own merits, have stirred to frenzy an apathetic and partly educated German populace. It is not surprising therefore that, almost at the very beginning of the Reformation, religious disputes began to shift on to an historical terrain. The Reformers quickly realised that the appeal to history might provide an argument which the ignorant mob could understand; proof that the old system had long ago broken down and had always been inefficient and corrupt would be a most telling justification of the new order. This appeal was likely to be attractive to those practically minded people who did not bother their heads about theological or philosophical discussions. Luther was among the first to see the value of historical propaganda,

and he said so with his usual frankness in a preface to a history of the Popes written by Robert Barnes in 1536.[1]

'I have been constrained by sorrow of heart, and also by legitimate rage, to pour out all this in order that I might inspire other pious and Christian souls to investigate, as much as they can be investigated, the popish tyranny and the Pope's Church. For without doubt all those who have the Spirit of Christ know well that they can bring no higher or more acceptable praise offering to God than all they can say or write against this bloodthirsty, unclean, blaspheming whore of the devil.[2] I for my part, unversed and ill-informed as I was at first with regard to history, attacked the papacy, *a priori*, as they say, that is out of the Holy Scriptures. And now it is a wonderful delight to me to find that others are doing the same thing *a posteriori*, that is from history—and it gives me the greatest joy and satisfaction to see, as I do most clearly, that history and Scripture entirely coincide in this respect.'[3]

The modern controversialist might smile at this strategy, but few people in the sixteenth century could see that Luther had given his position away and laid himself and his party open to a counter-attack.

On another occasion the Reformer wrote:

'God grant that the pens of some others may write a thousand times more strongly. For the diabolical papacy is the greatest disaster on earth, and the worst all the devils can perform with their power.'[4]

From these passages, and there are many more to the same effect, it is clear that the new interest which

[1] *Vitae Pontificum Romanorum Quos Papas vocamus.* Wittenberg. The preface was reprinted by Seckendorf in *Commentarius Hist. et Apol. de Lutheranismo*, index to Bk. III., Leipzig, 1692, 'quia liber ipse rarissime invenitur.'

[2] 'contra hanc cruentam, blasphemam et sacrilegam meretricem diaboli.'

[3] Quoted by Janssen, *History of the German People*, tr. A. M. Christie, London, 1906, vol. x. p. 2.

[4] Janssen, *op. cit.* vol. x. p. 3.

urged scholars in the sixteenth century to investigate the records of the past was distinctly unhistorical. And it is strange to think that from such motives, and with such unscientific principles, should have been engendered modern scientific history.

Until this time the writing of history had been left, one may say, to chance. Now and again a ready-made historian was born into the world, and then, even under the most unfavourable conditions, a history was produced. So wrote Gregory of Tours his accurate and critical 'History of the Franks,' and the Venerable Bede his 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People'; individualistic efforts of genius that owe little to contemporary thought, nothing to contemporary science, and have only recently been appreciated at their proper value. Broadly speaking, it can be said that during the Middle Ages there were no historians, only hagiographers and chroniclers, both caterers for popular tastes and prejudices, religious and national.

Although a general application of the critical faculty to the study of history really dates only from the end of the nineteenth century, the importance of such study was first made prominent by the Reformers. Luther must be credited with a realisation of the educational and social value, the experimental value, of historical knowledge, and also with having inspired the first plan of co-operative work. And it is of the essence of successful scientific work, especially in the writing of history, that it should be co-operative and unbroken. It was undoubtedly the idea and the influence of Luther which led to the organisation of scholars, the first of its kind, at Magdeburg, and to the collaborative production of a History of the Christian Church. The first volume of this vast collection appeared in 1559, under the

direction of Flacius Illyricus, at Bâle. It was really a collection of scandals and calumnies designed to prove that the whole body of Catholics were, and had always been, the foulest of the human species, that 'the mark of the Beast was branded on their foreheads.'

Among the numerous fables propagated by these historians the most striking and effective were the absurd story of the Popess Joan, and the still more ridiculous tale of the 6000 children's heads said to have been found in the fishpond of a nunnery in the days of Gregory I. 'Suchlike unutterable and most monstrous deeds of sin and shame,' wrote Flacius, 'of horrible and abominable profligacy, and gruesome murder of countless innocent children, are still perpetrated at the present day by his holiness the Pope and his priests.' 'It is not without good reason,' says another historian of that period, 'that convents and monasteries are built close to large ponds and swamps.' [1]

These stories were circulated in such filthy language that some of the Reformers themselves were impelled to make repeated but ineffective protests. Yet amidst all this insanity there was hidden the germ of an idea. Flacius and his associates, known afterwards as the Centuriators of Magdeburg, were the first to embark upon a plan of organised historical research; their research was a search for scandal; they specialised in misrepresentation; they mutilated, stole, and even forged; but they established the method of collective work and the idea of the continuity of history.

Thus the Centuriators mark an epoch in historiography. They provided a motive for historical research; they created a new interest in records;

[1] Janssen, x. p. 34.

and long after the unworthy motive had been forgotten, the interest, the study of history for its own sake, still survived.

Yet for all this the Centuriators only deserve half the credit; the other half belongs to the Catholics, headed by Baronius.

Inspired and commanded by St. Philip Neri, Baronius devoted his life to the refutation of historical calumny. His method has served as a model to posterity. His work was almost entirely constructive; he did not mention the name of his adversaries nor did he seek to refute them in detail. He lifted history out of the region of polemics. Such faults, errors, failures, as his work contains are of a kind which carries no stigma. Baronius was, of course, a partisan; but to the abuse of the Centuriators he opposed a dignity of demeanour which struck a new note in the writing of ecclesiastical history. The 'Annales' of Baronius, writes Professor Peterson,

> 'for three centuries have been the inspiration of students of history and an inexhaustible storehouse for research. No one work has treated so completely the epoch with which they deal. Nowhere are there to be found so many important documents. Unbiassed scholars recognise in them the foundation stone of true historical science, and in their author the qualities of the model historian.'[1]

Perhaps the most serious defect of Baronius is his uncritical treatment of the lives of saints, of miracles and relics. A submissive and uncritical attitude of mind towards events for which a supernatural explanation has been alleged, not uncommon among a certain school of historians even at the present day, is, strange as it may appear to many observers, not incompatible with sound judgment on the realities of history. And it is

[1] Art. 'Baronius' in *C.E.*

probable that the credulity of Baronius did not impair to any great extent the historical value of his tremendous labours. The work of Baronius, who died on the completion of the 12th volume of his 'Annales' in 1607, stands, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, an example of sound historical method for all the world to see. But to one very considerable portion of this seventeenth-century world the monument was invisible. In England and in Scotland the influence of Baronius upon the ecclesiastical literature of the seventeenth century is almost negligible. The reason is partly a political one. England had declared and successfully enforced for many generations what practically amounted to a blockade against certain continental historians. It was penal, from the days of Elizabeth, even to possess the most learned works on the Catholic side. And the only history of the Church admitted, and indeed officially enforced, was based on the work of the Centuriators of Magdeburg. The Catholics could not obtain a hearing, and thus throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, and a great part of the eighteenth, a false historical tradition flourished uncontradicted, became national, and helped in no small degree to prolong opposition to what the Scottish Reformers loved to call 'this cursed Papistrie.'[1]

If there is a history not yet written which should be written, it is the history of No-popery. As far as I know, no one has made a detailed study of this great effort in semi-historical propaganda, which, starting with Luther in the first half of the sixteenth century, continued with an ever-increasing violence, both in Germany and Britain, until the commencement of the eighteenth century, and then gradually

[1] The phrase occurs repeatedly in *The First Book of Discipline.*

decreased, with intermittent reactionary interludes, during the nineteenth century, and leads at the present day an underground and no longer reputable existence.

For the persistent, extremely active, and really genuine fear and hatred of 'Popery' both in England and Scotland—in the latter country contempt being perhaps a dominating sentiment during the eighteenth century—nationalism and insularity are not of themselves a sufficient explanation. Nor does the political history of Britain altogether account for the prolonged frenzy which lasted for nearly three hundred years. This curious phenomenon, the growth and progress of No-popery in England and Scotland, the wonderful success of an enormous and continuous propaganda, has not yet been sufficiently studied. We are indeed, perhaps, still too near to be able to see it in a right perspective. The propaganda, although occasionally theological, was in the main historical; at any rate the historical part made the strongest appeal to 'Patriotism'; and, in the seventeenth century, to 'Loyalty.' 'Popish Principles Pernicious to Protestant Princes' was the title of a work composed by T. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, and published in London in 1679.[1] 'The Case of Protestant England were they under a Popish Prince,' which first appeared in 1681, was reprinted in 1748, and again in 1750, shortly after the production of a similar work entitled 'The Protestants' Doom in Popish Times,' London, 1745.

Of the majority of books and tracts on the subject of Popery, published in the seventeenth century, it

[1] Polemical Protestants have a peculiar partiality for alliteration. I have a good example of this practice in a pamphlet printed in 1826 with the title: *A Cloth-Brush for Cleansing the Cobwebs of Catholicism from a Cameronian's Coat.*

can at any rate be said that the titles are descriptive of the contents and suffice to indicate the spirit in which they were written. There exists no complete list of these productions. From various sources I have been able to collect a few hundred titles, of which the following are the most instructive and typical of the whole :

'The Pope's Funeral,' Thos. Bell, 1606.

'The Downfall of Popery,' Thos. Bell, 1608.

'The Rates of the Pope's Custom House,' Crashaw, 1621.

'Antichrist the Pope of Rome,' Beard, 1625.

'The Jesuit's Looking-Glass,' L. Owen, 1629.

'Rome's Great Sacrilege,' D. Featly, 1630.

'An Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity,' H. More, 1664.

'The Nullity of the Romish Faith,' M. Poole, 1667.

'The Pope of Rome is Antichrist,' H. Wilkinson, 1675.

'Naked Popery,' R. Baxter, 1677.

'The Pedigree of Popery,' 1688.[1]

'Idolatry' was at this time a favourite topic of controversy. I have on my list about half a dozen 'Discourses' on this subject, along with 'Antidotes,' 'Preservatives,' and also an 'Arrow' against this besetting sin of Popery. But the most important series of tracts is that written by the well-known ecclesiastical historian, Edward Stillingfleet, who published first in 1671 a 'Discourse on Idolatry,' then in 1673 a 'Defence of his Discourse,' then, in 1676, an 'Answer in Defence,' and finally a pamphlet with a title

[1] Of books and tracts on Popery there exists no complete inventory. For tracts published in the last quarter of the seventeenth century consult *A Catalogue of the Collection of Tracts for and against Popery (published in or about the reign of James II.)*. Printed for the Chetham Society, 1859.

which deserves to be quoted in full: 'Several Conferences between a Romish Priest, A Fanatic Chaplain, and a Divine of the Church of England concerning the Idolatry of the Church of Rome' (London, 1679). In this somewhat ghoulish exploration of abandoned bookshelves I have been encouraged by the discovery of a rare tract entitled:

> The Catalogue of All the Discourses published Against Popery during the reign of King James by the members of the Church of England and the non conformists with the names of the authors of them. Printed and are to be sold by R. Baldwin next door to the Black Bull in the Old Bailey (London, 1689).

However the list is far from complete, and the author admits that there are many lacunae in his admirable collection, which reaches a total of two hundred and eighty-eight volumes.

Perhaps the most striking feature of all this lamentable literature is the obvious earnestness and sincerity of writers who have lost all sense of humour and have attained, even in the titles of their books and tracts, a supreme degree of the ridiculous. For unintentional buffoonery the prize might perhaps be given to a book published in 1675 with the following description:

> *Southwark Morning Exercise against Popery* (by Annesley, Baxter, Clarkson, Doolittle, Fairclough, Fowler, Hurst, Jenkin, Lawrence, Lee, Lye, Maxton, Mayo, Needler, Owen, Poole, Steele, Sylvester, Veal, Vincent, West, and Wilkinson).

These names are but a few out of the great multitude of writers who followed the lead of the Centuriators in the work of abusing the Papacy, a task facilitated by the ample material for scandal provided by most of the Renaissance Popes whose crimes and vices, needlessly exaggerated, were attributed to all the successors of St. Peter. It is

therefore not surprising that, at the end of the eighteenth century, public opinion was almost unanimous in regarding the Popes as deceitful and degenerate foreigners who only differed from each other in their capacity for the concealment of every sort of crime and immorality.

This state of public opinion was the inevitable result of the persistent historical propaganda conducted by writers who professed always a strict impartiality and a love of truth for its own sake, but had seldom any hesitation in admitting a polemical motive, and did not even take pains to disguise the fact that their work was invariably a compilation of extracts from other writers as ignorant as themselves. In history so composed, the critical faculty, the weighing of evidence, played no part.

A history of the Popes published by John Mills in 1757, regarded at the time as moderate and impartial, sums up the national estimate of Popery in the following words:

'I have no interest to praise or blame the See of Rome. . . . Avarice, ambition, sacrilege, perjury, an absolute contempt of everything sacred, the most amazing dissoluteness, every species of debauchery in excess, a total depravity and corruption of doctrine and morals, characterise the history of the Popes. Such instances are highly disagreeable. . . .'[1]

With the middle of the eighteenth century came to an end perhaps the darkest period of English historical literature, and some idea of its obscurity is needed to appreciate the oft-quoted, and generally misunderstood, observation of Newman that Gibbon was the only Englishman who could be regarded as an ecclesiastical historian.[2]

[1] Vol. i. p. xii.

[2] Augustine Birrell, *Res Judicatae*, 1892, p. 71: 'We have Cardinal Newman's authority for the assertion that Gibbon is the only Church historian worthy of the name who has written in English.' One might add—Au royaume des aveugles les borgnes sont rois.

On the Continent the most successful, the most popular, counter-attack against the Centuriators and their successors was led by Bossuet, who wrote with the noble but almost unrealisable ideal of reuniting Christendom. Modern French criticism has borne witness to the scholarship and critical ability shown in the 'Variations des Églises Protestantes' (1688). 'Never has any polemical work been more painstakingly or more impartially prepared': such is the opinion of Ferdinand Brunetière, who at the time he wrote his 'Manuel de l'histoire de la Littérature Française' (Paris, 1897) had no sympathy with the clerical party.

To the 'Histoire des Variations' Gibbon attributed his hasty and short-lived submission, at the age of 18, to the Catholic Church. And his comment in later life on this event is characteristically confined to a short but expressive sentence, 'I surely fell by a noble hand.'

With the exception of murder, there was in the eighteenth century, or even much later, no offence a man could commit which was regarded with more horror than conversion to Rome. The insular mentality of those times may be recovered from a letter written by Charlotte Brontë from Brussels so recently as 1842:

> 'My advice to all Protestants who are tempted to do anything so besotted as to turn Catholics, is to walk over the sea to the Continent; to attend Mass sedulously for a time; to note well the mummeries thereof; also the idiotic mercenary aspect of all the priests; and *then*, if they are still disposed to consider papisterie in any other light than a most feeble, childish piece of humbug, let them turn papists at once.'[1]

Such an act was looked upon as a species of depraved insanity involving disgrace on all who had

[1] *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, by E. C. Gaskell (London, 1867), p. 177.

any connection with the culprit. Gibbon, of course, had to leave Oxford at once, and was packed off like a wicked schoolboy to Lausanne, where he was put under the care of a Lutheran pastor.

What the process of cure was, we do not know, but it was sufficiently drastic to strip the young man's mind of all religious belief. Yet the effect of the blow received from Bossuet lasted all through his life. He also appealed to history, and his reply to the 'Histoire des Variations' can be traced in the pages of the 'Decline and Fall.'

Gibbon was the first, and perhaps the only, historian of his time to write with an appearance of impartiality, with a cold dislike of Protestantism, with sufficient knowledge of Catholicism to sharpen his pen against Popery.

For a hundred years after its publication in 1776, his famous book was used by every kind of historian, by writers of popular handbooks, by school teachers, by the historical novelist, by the compilers of encyclopedias, as the one and only reliable source for the story of Christian Europe.

Gibbon has been treated by the critics as an authority second only to the Bible.

'There can be no gainsaying the sentence of this great judge,' wrote Thackeray. 'To have your name mentioned by Gibbon is like having it written on the Dome of St. Peter's; pilgrims from all the world admire and behold it.'

The undeniable fact that most of the material in the 'Decline and Fall' was taken from second-hand sources was regarded as a proof of the author's wonderful discrimination and power of critical and artistic selection. 'This only showed,' wrote Sir Fitzjames Stephen, one of the most esteemed historical critics of the nineteenth century, 'that Gibbon

possessed one of the most valuable gifts that an historian can possess, the gift of forming a sound judgment as to the value of his authorities.' [1]

This appeal to the value of Gibbon's authorities provides a test of judgment accessible to everyone, because it demands no specialised knowledge of history; all that is necessary is to read a few of the authors whose names are quoted in the footnotes of the 'Decline and Fall' to see if Gibbon's praise of them can be justified. Few readers in the nineteenth century took this precaution. The question which ought to have been asked is: What value can be attached to the definite statements made by Gibbon concerning the credit of his authorities, the 'guides' of whom he often spoke in such flattering terms?

Now the first fact revealed by examination of the famous footnotes is that many of these writers, whom Gibbon has selected for special praise, whose names have been written, as it were, in large type on the Dome of St. Peter's, have no other claim to celebrity. They were not writers excellent in their own day, having now become obsolete, but men whose work has never deserved the name of history and could no more become out of date than 'Gulliver's Travels' or 'Robinson Crusoe.'

It is true, as Professor Bury has said, that Gibbon made great use of Tillemont, an ornament of the historical renaissance in seventeenth-century France, the latchet of whose shoe few historians are worthy to loose, declared (by d'Arbois de Jubainville) to be 'one of the greatest of French scholars . . . his work still useful to scholarship at the present day.'

This is not one of the names which Thackeray's 'pilgrims' were likely to admire. 'A useful scavenger,'

[1] *Horae Sabbaticae* (reprint of articles contributed to *Saturday Review*), vol. ii. p. 390.

says Gibbon, 'who has raked up all the dirt of the Fathers.'[1] The nineteenth-century 'pilgrims' would naturally regard the whole of patristic literature with the utmost contempt. Gibbon refers them to the works of Archbishop Ussher, 'for all that learning can extract from the rubbish of the Dark Ages.'[2] No one seems to have noticed that it was the duty of an historian to read this 'rubbish' himself and not to rely on Ussher or any other scholar, however learned. 'I am almost a stranger,' confessed Gibbon on another page, 'to the voluminous sermons of Chrysostom; my personal acquaintance with the Bishop of Hippo does not extend beyond the "Confessions" and the "City of God."'[3]

This attitude of contempt for patristic literature strikes the same note of self-contentment which became intensified among Englishmen, and Scotsmen too, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when confronted with foreigners, especially those of the Latin race.

Paley has made some remarks upon the corrupting effect of such contempt, which are here very much to the point; he was not writing about any nation or individual; his words should be printed in large type and hung over the desk of every student of history:

> 'Little reliance can be placed upon the most acute judgment, in subjects which they are pleased to despise; and which they of course from the first deem unworthy to be inquired into . . . This contempt prior to examination is an intellectual vice from which the greatest faculties of mind are not free.'[4]

The spectacle of pilgrims gazing with affectionate respect and admiration at the names mentioned in the footnotes of the 'Decline and Fall' is at present uncommon. Hardly anyone to-day has heard of

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 153. [2] *Ibid.* p. 375. [3] *Ibid.* p. 407.
[4] *Evidences*, vol. ii. ch. iv. p. 336 (6th edition).

Gibbon's favourite guide, 'the rational and moderate Mosheim.' Many years have passed since anyone has bowed to the other authorities upon Church history he so warmly recommends: 'The correct and liberal scholar Dr. Jortin,' 'the laborious Henry,' 'the diligent Mr. Thomas Warton,' or the 'cautious Basnage.'

Why Basnage should be described as 'cautious' it would be interesting to know, because that writer in his 'Histoire de l'Église' did little more than translate the Centuriators of Magdeburg.

His caution may have consisted in the fact that he omitted to copy some of the absurd calumnies that the public could no longer be asked to swallow.

This use made by Gibbon of material from the work of the Magdeburg historians, after it had passed through various hands, has affected the course of subsequent historical studies to an extent not sufficiently appreciated. Many examples might be given to show how the absurdities of some eighteenth-century bigot, transmuted in Gibbon's crucible, have obtained the status of well-considered historical judgments.

There is the 'diligent' Mr. Warton, 'from whose learned dissertations prefixed to the first volume of his "History of English Poetry," much instruction is to be derived, on the state of learning in the Middle Ages.'[1]

The dissertations of Warton contain hardly any information about the Middle Ages, but they do help to provide an illustration of the process whereby an idea, embodied in a catch-phrase, originating from an obscure source, but universally accepted as the original thought of a great historian, has succeeded in obtaining a permanent place in historical literature.

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. p. 152.

Errors often enjoy a long lease of life through the transmigration of ideas which have no link with the facts. Such an idea, the origin of which has been forgotten, clothed in an attractive phrase, may be handed on from one generation to another, gaining at every step an increase of authority. The process can be seen at work in the following extracts:

THOMAS WARTON.

Chivalry by degrees was consecrated by religion, whose authority tinctured every passion, and was engrafted into every institution, of the superstitious ages; and at length composed that singular picture of manners, in which the *love of a god and the Ladies* were reconciled, the saint and the hero were blended, and charity and revenge, zeal and gallantry, devotion and valour were united.[1]

GIBBON.

Superstition mingled in every public and private action of life . . . and the order of chivalry was assimilated in its rights and privileges to the sacred orders of priesthood. The bath and white garment of the novice were an indecent copy of the regeneration of baptism . . . As the champion *of God and the ladies* (I blush to write such discordant names), he devoted himself, etc.[2]

WALTER SCOTT.

The love of the ancient cavaliers was a licensed species of idolatry, which the love of Heaven alone was theoretically supposed to approach in intensity and which in practice is seldom equalled. *God and the Ladies* were familiarly appealed to in the same breath; and devotion to the fair sex was as peremptorily enjoined upon aspirants to the honour of chivalry as that which was due to Heaven.[3]

Macaulay in his 'Essay on Milton' presents the same idea in words which betray the influence of Gibbon:

'Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became

[1] *Dissertation* i. p. lxxii, *History of English Poetry*, Thomas Warton, 4 vols., London, 1824 (new edition), first published 1774.

[2] *Decline and Fall*, vol. vi. p. 283 (ed. Bury).

[3] *Fair Maid of Perth*, vol. i. p. 32 (Edin. 1828).

a new paganism . . . the fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity, and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion.' [1]

The significance of these assembled quotations must not be sought for in any mistake of fact or date. There is something more important. We have here got behind the scenes. We have got into the historian's workshop, and can watch him at his task. 'The great judge' takes his report upon the relationship of religion and chivalry, not from a study of contemporary documents, but from the dissertations of a poet laureate; not only the judgment but even the wording of the sentence 'that cannot be gainsaid' is borrowed from a hidden and unsuspected source.

There are several references in the 'Decline and Fall' to a Life of Gustavus Adolphus by the Rev. Mr. Harte, M.A., a Canon of Windsor. Gibbon is silent, however, as to the qualifications of that writer to the title of historian. And for a very good reason. It was a custom in the eighteenth century for writers unknown to the public to seek fame by dedicating their work to some noble patron. Mr. Harte selected, with a result wholly unexpected, the famous Lord Chesterfield, to whom he wrote a dedication couched in terms of ludicrous flattery. 'My labours,' said this impertinent snob, 'are perused, protected, and encouraged by One [*sic*] whose single approbation is a sort of universal passport throughout all Europe.' But Lord Chesterfield, far from willing to give a passport to the obsequious Canon, declared that the value of Mr. Harte's work 'was much deteriorated by the singular and unaccountable vulgarity of the

[1] *Critical and Historical Essays*, London, 1843, vol. i. p. 23. The late Professor Bury pointed out (*Decline and Fall*, in footnote to vol. vi. p. 284) that Gibbon was wrong in dating the rise of chivalry to the eleventh century.

language in which it was written.'[1] The criticism is moderate, for the style and manner of Harte is slovenly, confused, and careless, to a degree seldom reached by any historical writer, even in the 'Dark Ages.'

Among the books recommended by Gibbon, which few readers within the last fifty years can have ever looked at, is Bolingbroke's 'Letters on the Study of History,' wherein is displayed that amalgam of scepticism and credulity peculiar to the eighteenth century.

After formulating the thesis that the proper purpose of historical study is the improvement of the individual and the State, Bolingbroke rejected as useless the study of all history previous to the sixteenth century. The useful period begins with the Reformation. After that date, 'historical monuments are in every man's hand; the facts are sufficiently verified; and even that scene of solemn refined banter exhibited in the Council of Trent imposes on no man.[2] To be learned [about the ages previous to the sixteenth century] is a ridiculous affectation.'[3]

There was in England, at the time this advice was given, little need for alarm. Very few students of history ran much risk of making themselves ridiculous in this manner. And among the historians who have enjoyed the supreme distinction of having their names 'mentioned by Gibbon,' there are many who cannot be accused of a ridiculous affectation of learning about any period of history, whether before or after the Reformation.

[1] *Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield*, London, 1845, vol. iv.

[2] Vol. i. p. 212.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 201. In his *Theory and History of Historiography* (Eng. tr., London 1921, pp. 30–31), Benedetto Croce ascribes a philosophical motive to Bolingbroke's contempt for history previous to the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Anyone who will take the trouble to read through Jortin's 'Remarks' on Church history will finish the book with a feeling of surprise that Gibbon could have described the author as 'a correct and liberal scholar who has laboured with great sense and moderation.' I am often in two minds as to whether the compliments which Gibbon pays to his authorities were intended to be taken seriously.

Jortin made no pretensions to scholarship. His attitude towards the medieval Church resembles that of the good old English squire who admitted into his select civilisation nothing continental except port and claret. People of this type who write history are always most particular to disclaim any controversial intention. One of Jortin's concluding observations, which may be interpreted as a profession of impartiality, will be sufficient to illustrate the liberality of this remarkable man:

'I shall not here go about to combat that baffled system of superstition and iniquity, which hath been confuted a thousand times, and which perhaps no author ever attacked, without giving it a mortal wound.'[1]

For an example of Jortin's 'moderation,' I have chosen his description of the second Nicene Council as:

'A cabal of ecclesiastics, who showed themselves evidently the most lying knaves and senseless blockheads upon the face of the earth.'[2]

And for 'great sense' I am content with his account of the Jesuits as 'a sect founded by an illiterate fanatic and lunatic.'

Although the name of Jortin has been forgotten and was perhaps little known even to the nineteenth century, he has lived anonymously in the pages of

[1] *Remarks*, vol. iii. p. 208. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. ed. 1805, p. 78.

writers far more distinguished than himself and consequently more harmful to historical truth. The continuity of falsehood in history is unfortunately assured by the readiness with which people accept the historical statements of anyone who has a literary reputation, provided of course that those statements harmonise with popular prejudice. D'Israeli in his 'Curiosities of Literature' introduced a quantity of polemical gossip most of which was taken, not always with acknowledgment, from the remarkable Jortin, whose absurdities, under so distinguished a patron, thus acquired a fresh lease of life.

When a critic and lawyer so well known as Sir Fitzjames Stephen has declared that Gibbon possessed the gift of being able to form a sound judgment upon the value of his authorities, it is surely useful to point out that a judgment which can speak of the preposterous Jortin as a 'correct and liberal scholar' is both affected and ridiculous.

Yet as a matter of fact Gibbon, unlike D'Israeli, made very little use of Jortin's 'Remarks'; his favourite guide to ecclesiastical history, if the flattery of the footnotes can be trusted, was the once popular Lutheran historian, Johann Lorenz Mosheim.

CHAPTER II

THE GERMAN GHOST OF GIBBON

Mosheim and Gibbon—The continued influence of German Lutheranism on the study of Church history in England during the nineteenth century —Mosheim and his authorities—The Benedictines of St. Maur.

Johann Lorenz Mosheim was born at Lübeck in 1693, became Professor of Theology at Helmstadt, and in 1747 Chancellor of the University of Göttingen. He died in 1755.

His most famous historical work, 'Institutiones Historiae Ecclesiasticae,' was completed in 1741. It was written for the use of students and was in every way an improvement on the heavy folios of the Centuriators. Mosheim was the first of the post-Reformation writers to abandon the system of reckless abuse so vigorously inaugurated by those famous pioneers. His compendium is dull and lifeless; but its most serious defect consists in lack of contact with the sources. Yet for nearly a hundred years after its publication the 'Institutions' of Mosheim, repeatedly translated into English, and edited mostly by men almost wholly deficient of the critical faculty, was practically the only textbook used by Church students in England, Scotland, and America; and there is no better measure of the low level of historical work in those countries during the first half of the nineteenth century than the chorus of praise addressed to the German historian by his numerous translators and admirers.

No one has surpassed the effusive flattery of

Dowling in a book with the misleading title: 'An Introduction to the Critical Study of Ecclesiastical History,' which was published at Oxford in 1838:

'Extensive learning and ready eloquence have very rarely been so happily combined as they were in Johann Lorenz Mosheim . . . . We TRACE THROUGHOUT HIS WORKS A STRAIGHTFORWARD HONESTY AND LOVE OF TRUTH. His Institutes of Ecclesiastical History is still in many respects the first work of its class. And if our theological students must needs obtain an acquaintance with theological history from compendiums and foreigners they cannot even yet be referred to a safer and better guide.'[1]

The extent to which this German Lutheran has influenced the teaching of history in the nineteenth century was well emphasised in the preface to Dr. Soames's edition:

'A general knowledge of ecclesiastical history has long been sought in England from Mosheim. His great work is known for a degree of research and impartiality. . . . Reference is however the end for which his work will ever be used . . . it is a compilation . . . which any clergyman or other person able to appreciate historical knowledge would be likely to consult habitually.'

Nearly all the numerous editors of the various editions of the great handbook agree in stressing its utility as a *reliable work of reference.*

Bishop Stubbs, who was responsible for one of the latest editions (1865), declares that:

'A man who reads it carefully and with industrious recourse to the abundant authorities referred to by the author cannot well turn away from its study without a just and accurate, if not adequate, knowledge of Church history.'

Another editor, lacking in a sense of humour, is worth quoting to show how persistently Mosheim was praised for his *love of truth*:

[1] pp. 192 and 194.

'The great American section of Britain's noble progeny uses the ecclesiastical history most consulted in the land of its fathers . . . these volumes display a *Protestant anxiety to speak the truth fully upon questions relating to the Church of Rome.*'

It is clear that the nineteenth century fully agreed with Gibbon's judgment of Mosheim as an historian who was, as we are told in the 'Decline and Fall,' 'learned . . . judicious . . . rational . . . correct . . . and moderate.' What Mosheim's work is really worth, whether he is correct and moderate and, above all, whether he is honest, are questions which deserve a moment's consideration.

The first question is whether his general view of history was sensible; the second and most important, whether he told the truth. The critics one and all insist upon his moderation. And it is strange to find Harnack writing that Mosheim was 'averse to fault-finding and polemic.'[1] Mosheim was most emphatically a partisan. He wrote, just like his predecessors the Centuriators of Magdeburg, with the settled conviction that from the earliest centuries right up to the Reformation the whole of Christian Europe had been plunged into a gross and superstitious ignorance. And he expressed this conviction in terms of rhetorical exaggeration.

But the most important question is whether Mosheim's historical methods were honest; whether his work shows a 'straightforward love of truth'; whether his references are to be trusted and can safely be accepted 'by any clergyman or other person able to appreciate historical knowledge.' This question was first correctly answered by Dr. Waddington, Dean of Durham, who, to the credit of English scholarship, expressed with vigorous

[1] *Hist. of Dogma* (tr.), London, 1897, vol. i. p. 27.

indignation his opinion of 'Mosheim's treachery.'[1] S. R. Maitland[2] and others have borne the same testimony.

The story of how Mosheim misquoted the homilies of St. Eligius as evidence that in the ninth century the 'greater part of religion consisted in a senseless fondness for dead bodies and bones' was told by Cardinal Newman in a page which has become an English classic.[3] Mosheim's treatment of evidence is unique even among ecclesiastical historians. His misdemeanour in regard to St. Eligius does not stand alone. Not once but many times, and with volume and page in support, he represents his authorities as saying 'black' when they very distinctly said 'white.'

That he should have done this repeatedly, that he should for so long have escaped detection, that he enjoyed the confidence of Gibbon, that his editors and translators have rhapsodised over his 'straightforward love of truth' are facts which ought to be kept on record; for the beatification of Mosheim by the British critics is a curiosity of historical literature.

To show how little Gibbon merits his reputation as a sound judge of authorities and how shallow and superficial was the course of historical studies in Church history during the greater part of the nineteenth century, I will give two examples of Mosheim's method of using evidence which have hitherto escaped detection. These bold deceptions could easily have been discovered by anyone who took the trouble to refer, as Bishop Stubbs suggested, to 'the

[1] *History of the Church* (London, 1833), p. 298.

[2] *Dark Ages*, p. 109.

[3] Newman's exposure of Mosheim, prefaced with the story of 'Mumpsimus,' begins on page 97 of his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, 1851 (new ed., Longmans, 1913).

abundant authorities.' That the discovery was not made seems to prove that the trouble was never taken. In his chapter on the seventh century—heading, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY; subheading, STATE OF LEARNING, IGNORANCE OF BISHOPS—Mosheim, after making some proper reflections upon the deplorable ignorance and barbarity of that period, states that 'The rude and unlearned bishops suffered the schools which had been submitted to their care to languish and become extinct.' In support of this assertion the reader is given a reference to 'L'Histoire Littéraire de la France par les Moines Bénédictins,' vol. iii. p. 428, etc.' Now whether the seventh-century bishops of Gaul were rude and unlearned or whether they suffered their schools to languish and become extinct, is at least debatable. But the interesting point here is that Mosheim says that he found the fact so stated by the Benedictine monks in the third volume of their history on page 428; on which page these monks say precisely the contrary[1]: 'The episcopal schools, conducted by Prelates of such distinguished merit, were of necessity still maintained with some degree of efficiency, although they had considerably declined in many churches.' This sentence, on page 428, comes immediately after two pages devoted to praise of the bishops of Gaul, who are described as 'holy, learned, the ornament and glory of the Gallic church . . . distinguished for their learning and doctrine.' Amidst the general decadence of learning in the seventh century, due of course to the unsettled state of Europe, Gaul in particular being paralysed by prolonged civil war,

'the episcopal schools were still maintained in France with some honour. We must judge of their merit from that of

[1] *H.L.*, vol. iii. p. 428.

the bishops at their head, who became scarcely less illustrious for their learning than for the sanctity of their lives.'

Twenty-two such bishops are mentioned by name as distinguished for learning and piety; but the list is by no means a complete one, for the Benedictine authors continue as follows, still on page 428:

'It must not be imagined that it was only these great Prelates who adorned the church of the Gauls with saintliness and learning during this century of barbarism and ignorance . . . in general THE BISHOPS OF FRANCE, even in this century of darkness, WERE SO ESTEEMED FOR THEIR ERUDITION and the purity of their faith that the Pope begged King Sigebert to send some from amongst them to Rome that they might be sent as missionaries to the East.'

Mosheim's reference was to 'page 428, etc.' The twenty pages which may be included in the 'etc.,' because they deal exclusively with this question of the seventh-century schools in Gaul, contain little else except a constant reiteration accompanied with numerous instances of the learning of the bishops and their struggle to maintain the schools committed to their care. The episcopal school at Paris still retained something of its former splendour; if it unfortunately came to an end like so many others it was restored under the episcopate of St. Ceraune; St. Cerbien, Bishop of Frisengues, opened another school himself near Chartres; at Chartres itself a school remained in full vigour during the seventh century. The episcopal schools of Le Mans and Bourges flourished. The Bishops of Clermont took special care to uphold the schools of their Church; Vienne, Gap, Lyon were famous schools under the patronage of learned bishops. It was at Lyon that St. Wilfrid, a Bishop of York, was instructed in those arts befitting an ecclesiastic, under the discipline of the Bishop of that place. Utrecht, Maestricht,

Trèves were under the jurisdiction of several great bishops. The episcopal schools of Metz bore a great reputation; the Bishop of Cambrai himself directed the studies in his own Church. These are some of the examples which the authors of the 'Histoire Littéraire' have given of the efforts made by the bishops of Gaul to maintain and develop education in the seventh century. 'But it must not be supposed,' they go on to write, 'that there are not many others than those we have spoken of.' [1]

That Mosheim, in mishandling this evidence, in representing his authorities as saying black when they had really said white, was guilty of conscious insincerity is extremely doubtful. No writer would deliberately write down a falsehood and then give the reference which, sooner or later, would make discovery inevitable. The most rational explanation of Mosheim's treatment of the Benedictine historians seems to be that his mind was controlled by the will to prove a particular thesis, by the will to reach at all costs a particular objective. This objective, the same which had inspired Luther to encourage his followers in the sixteenth century to a study of history, was to make the old Church responsible for all the misfortunes and miseries of European history. Mosheim, with a mind thus incorrectly focussed, saw in the barbarity of the Merovingians the shadow of the Church; in the collapse of learning during prolonged civil war, the designing influence of Popes and bishops. He deduced quite logically from his first principles that a corrupt religion would suffice to explain the degeneracy of European civilisation. His opinions were the reverse of the truth; and with an almost incredible simplicity he reversed also the decisions

[1] *H.L.*, vol. iii. p. 434.

of his authoritative texts. This reversal of the texts is not a solitary accident, it is almost a habit.

In his summary of the literary history of the seventh century, Mosheim again foists his own opinions upon the Benedictine historians :

> The two books of Marculphus, a Gallic monk, help us much to discover the wretched state of religion and learning in that age.

For support of this assertion the reader is referred to the ' Histoire Littéraire,' vol. iii. p. 568, where, however, as might well be expected, no statement of the kind can be found. On the page referred to by Mosheim, the Benedictine authors wrote :

> ' The works of Marculphus were written in rude simple style, full of grammatical mistakes, a fault that arose not so much from ignorance in the author, as from the changes that were taking place in the manner of writing and speaking.'

If this were all, it might be possible to maintain that the contradiction between Mosheim's statement and his reference was merely due to his failure to distinguish between the meaning of the words ' learning ' and ' grammar.'

But the authors of the work he quotes were most careful to point out this important distinction. Far from suggesting that the books of Marculphus ' help us much to discover the wretched state of religion and learning ' they actually warn the reader against making any such erroneous inference :

> ' These grammatical faults should not make the works of Marculphus *any the less to be recommended*; they serve on the contrary to give a true knowledge of the rude and barbarous language spoken by our forefathers.'

It is unfortunately not safe to assume that history is no longer written and taught after the manner of

Mosheim. In most of the popular textbooks used in Britain during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century the early medieval Church was blamed, not for failing to stem, but for actually encouraging, ignorance and corruption of morals.[1]

The constant repetition of such errors must be regarded as due to that perverse twist of will which, in persons of uncritical disposition, so easily blinds the intelligence to anything unfavourable to their cause.

Probably Mosheim aimed at telling the truth, as Harnack observed. He omitted from his history many, but not quite all, of the malicious inventions which had been circulated by Luther and his immediate disciples, the Centuriators of Magdeburg. But the habit of historical calumny which the early Lutherans readily acquired was not easily shaken off by their successors.

It is true that Gibbon built the framework of his ecclesiastical history out of materials collected by Tillemont and Muratori, and that he acknowledged his indebtedness to both. But his capacity for estimating the value of witnesses must be estimated from the recommendations of other 'authorities' contained in his footnotes. The name of Mosheim occurs more than fifty times and with scarcely ever a word of warning or blame. Other writers described as 'rational, moderate, reliable, and learned' were often fanatical and untruthful; an impartial judge would not have allowed their names to appear.

[1] It is worthy of note that the false charges which Mosheim brought against the seventh-century bishops of Gaul are repeated at the present day in the state schools of France. The textbooks used in the French schools were condemned by the French Episcopate in 1909. The numerous errors contained in these school books have been effectively dealt with by Jean Guiraud (*Histoire Partiale, Histoire Vraie*, Paris, 1914, vol. i. chapter xvi. 'L'Église et les écoles sous les Mérovingiens).

'To have your name mentioned by Gibbon' is by no means a certificate of either honesty or truthfulness.

Gibbon's conduct of the Papal case is nearly always unfair. His witnesses are sometimes liars and often fools. His genius rejoiced in conveying the impression, which so many of his readers have been willing to accept, that most Popes were rascals and only a few clever enough to escape detection. He was able to create an unfavourable impression about the best and greatest of the Popes with the turn of a phrase, and to weigh down the scales of justice, when no one was looking, with the skill of a conjuror. Modern scholarship has reversed or modified many of his verdicts against the Papacy. His appreciation of such historical problems as are involved by the Donation of Constantine, the False Decretals, the Crusades, Image Worship, and the origin and growth of monasticism, is no longer accepted by competent historians.

These verdicts stood, however, for a long time in the textbooks of history, and are still embedded in the minds of many people who cling to tradition and do not think for themselves.

On the Continent at the end of the eighteenth century the historical attack inaugurated by Luther, after two hundred and fifty years of sustained effort, had begun to show signs of weakening. To the scholarship of Jesuits and Benedictines there was no reply. Yet the attacking party still refused to admit defeat; they would not look at facts.

Voltaire declared that he had no intention of reading the Literary History of France, which was being constructed, volume by volume, with patient industry, by the Benedictines of St. Maur. A tragic pity indeed; for what a number of misconceptions about the Middle Ages . . . would have been

avoided if he had studied with more care the scholarly work of which he spoke with such scorn.[1]

Such was not the opinion of Thomas Warton, that 'learned and critical' ornament of Gibbon's footnotes who wrote of Voltaire as:

'The first who has displayed the literature and customs of the dark ages with any degree of penetration and comprehension.'

Whether Voltaire would have gained anything from studying the work of the Benedictines may, after the experience of Mosheim, be regarded as doubtful.

[1] Ernest Renan in *Essay on M. de Lamennais.*

CHAPTER III

SCOTTISH HISTORY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Gibbon in Scotland—The Macpherson conspiracy—Gibbon and the inventor of 'Ossian'—Sir Walter Scott—The 'Tales of a Grandfather'—a link with the Centuriators of Magdeburg.

WHETHER from a defect of the national temperament which is logical but not critical, or from the narrowing influence of Puritanism, Scotland has not yet produced a great historical scholar; and there is little sign, even in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, if the name of Flint be excepted, of historical sense or science.

John Pinkerton, who published in 1789 an 'Enquiry into the History of Scotland,' was not afraid to say what he thought about the deficiencies of his fellow countrymen; but though he observed the facts, he was unable to discover the cause.

'By a misfortune,' he wrote, 'chiefly arising from the remote situation of the country, while Scotland has produced many ingenious writers, it is impossible to mention even one who (not to speak of *Erudition*) can even bear the appellation of learned' [Preface, p. 6]. . . . 'The exclamation of Montesquieu in his letters, "vous êtes tous des charlatans, Messieurs les Antiquaires," may be applied to those of Scotland with peculiar justice' (p. 11).

Fordun, Hector Boece, Buchanan, were worthily succeeded by Sibbald, Dalrymple, Maitland, and other good patriots of the eighteenth century, all equally deficient in the critical faculty, and all of them as ignorant as any medieval monk of the duties and responsibilities of an historian.

This lack of the historical sense in eighteenth-century Scotland is not sufficiently accounted for by the remote situation of the country. To some extent it was the result of the intellectual isolation from Europe and the break with Latin traditions of scholarship which followed from the Reformation. 'Wherever Lutheranism prevails,' wrote Erasmus, 'learning and liberal culture go to the ground.'[1]

There is a contrast, not always adequately appreciated, between the post-Reformation literature of Scotland and the contemporary erudition of Latin countries where such men as Tillemont (†1698), Mabillon (†1707), Muratori (†1750), were laying the foundations of modern historical science. Of the Jesuit, Bollandus, who had started work in 1634, and his great collaborator, Papebroch, little or nothing was known in either England or Scotland. How many educated people, how many students of history, are even now aware that the Jesuits were the first to undertake on a large scale the critical investigation of the sources of history?

Gibbon pays a scurvy compliment to the authors of the *Acta Sanctorum*, which he refers to, only once, as an 'undertaking which through the medium of fable and superstition communicates much historical and philosophical instruction,'[2] a comment which shows that the great historian failed, or wanted to make sure his readers should fail, to understand and appreciate the value of the work Bollandus had begun.

In Scotland the name and work of the Bollandists remained unknown, and the Jesuits, who for generations had trained nearly all the scholars of Europe,

[1] 'Ubicunque regnat Lutheranismus, ibi literarum est interitus.'—Desiderii Erasmi Opera Omnia Lugd. Bat. 1703. vol. iii. (part. ii), col. 1139.

[2] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 414.

were regarded, in this country where such training was so badly needed, as scheming purveyors of superstition and fables. This poverty of scholarship and the general absence of a critical faculty perpetuated the controversy on national origins and antiquities which disfigures the historical literature of eighteenth-century Scotland.

Historians refused to admit that the word 'Scotus' had been originally used (till after the tenth century) to designate the inhabitants of Ireland, although Ussher in the first half, and Lloyd in the second half of the seventeenth century had placed the fact beyond reasonable discussion. Yet, because the truth was displeasing to national vanity, Scottish writers refused to accept it, and Mackenzie, in his 'Lives of Eminent Scotsmen' (1708), included among the national heroes so distinguished an Irishman as Columbanus of Bangor and Bobbio, and so doubtful a Scotsman as Duns Scotus.

It is significant that the only Scottish historian for whom Pinkerton could say a good word was Thomas Innes, a Catholic priest who had been educated at Paris and had acquired by long residence abroad something of that historical sense in which his countrymen were so deficient.

Like so many Scots who have achieved, or deserved to achieve, fame, Innes was a native of Aberdeenshire. He was born at Drumgask, near Aboyne, in the year 1662. In 1677 he was studying at Paris University, and was ordained priest in 1691. After a short visit to his native land he returned to France (1701), and remained there for over twenty years. About the year 1724 Innes was again in Scotland and lived at Edinburgh, where a glimpse of him at work is given by Wodrow[1]:

[1] *Analecta*, vol. iii, pp. 516, 517.

'There is one Father Innes . . . who has been in Edinburgh all this winter, and mostly in the Advocates' Library . . . looking books and manuscripts. He is not engaged in politics as far as can be guessed; and is a monkish bookish person who meddles with nothing but literature.'

In 1729 Innes published his 'Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland,' the only work on the subject, written by a Scotsman in the eighteenth century, which still has any value. His 'Civil and Ecclesiastical History,' only completed up to the ninth century, remained in manuscript until 1853, when it was edited by another distinguished Aberdonian, Dr. George Grub, and printed by the Spalding Club.

Innes has not always been given his proper place in Scotland as the one critical writer during a period of literary and critical decadence; he was ignored and has been forgotten by his fellow Catholics. His name is not mentioned in the Catholic Encyclopedia. Yet he came as near as any man of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries to merit the title of Scotland's best historical scholar.[1] His work owes little to Scotland, a country where the science of history was in the early days of the eighteenth century almost unknown.

In the sixteenth century Scotland had broken not only with the religion but also and inevitably with the scholarship of Europe. The minds of men were wasted upon unproductive religious disputes; intellectual interests were narrowed; historical judgments swayed by hatred and fear of the old Church. Knox did not leave behind him an atmosphere favourable to the Humanities. The abandonment of Latin as the liturgical tongue was a distinct educational reaction; the rejection of

[1] 'A scholar after the admirable fashion of his neighbours, the Benedictines of St. Maur.'—Joseph Robertson, preface to *Concilia Scotiae*, Edin. 1866.

ritual, an artistic and to some extent an intellectual loss from which Scotland has not yet recovered. After the Reformation had been accomplished, the reintroduction of organised education was a slow process. And in the new education, art held small place, history even less. A nationalism not really national, since it despised its ancestry, dominated thought, crippled education, and made the impartial study of history almost impossible.

At the time when France was the home of an historical Renaissance, when Benedictine monks and Jesuit priests were collecting and classifying the sources of European history, there appeared in the narrow and self-centred world of Scotland an impostor of unprecedented calibre, the famous James Macpherson.

This notorious deceiver was born in 1736, and educated at Aberdeen University. The poems of 'Ossian' were first published in 1760. Scotland, without waiting for evidence, eagerly welcomed the long-lost national genius; Adam Smith, the economist, Hume, Henry, and Robertson, the historians, were among the victims of a colossal mystification in which all Europe became involved. In vain Dr. Johnson asked to see the manuscripts from which it was alleged that the poems had been copied. No manuscripts were ever produced, but Macpherson's bluster was able to convince a large number of his uncritical fellow-countrymen; the Ossian controversy flourished, and has not even yet wholly subsided.

Few people remember that the mendacious operations of James Macpherson were not limited to Gaelic verse-making, and that in 1763 he published a composition to which he gave the misleading title of 'An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland.'

James, although his knowledge of history was

strictly limited to what he had learned at Aberdeen University, scored an immediate success among his admiring fellow-countrymen and achieved the great distinction of entry, with the accompaniment of effusive double-barrelled adjectives, to the footnotes of the 'Decline and Fall.'

Gibbon seems to have been completely deceived by Macpherson's singular attempt to pose as an historian, although it is possible that his profuse compliments may have hidden a subtle sarcasm.

'In the dark and doubtful paths of Caledonian antiquity I have chosen for my guides two learned and ingenious Highlanders, whom their birth and education had peculiarly qualified for that office. See Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, etc., of the Caledonians, by Dr. John Macpherson, London, 1768, in 4to; and Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, by James Macpherson, Esq., London, 1773, in 4to, third edit. Dr. Macpherson was a minister in the Isle of Sky; and it is a circumstance honourable for the present age that a work, replete with erudition and criticism, should have been composed in the most remote of the Hebrides.'[1]

Both these Macphersons were ignorant and foolish to a degree not often reached in Scotland or in any country at any period of history. There is something distinctly comic about the suggestion that the work of either of these men was 'replete with erudition and criticism.'

When Dr. Johnson once spent a wet Sunday afternoon in a Highland manse, he happened to pick up on the minister's table a copy of John Macpherson's 'Dissertations,' and his opinion of it is thus recorded by Boswell:

'You might read half an hour, and ask yourself what you have been reading; there were so many words to so little matter, that there was no getting through.'[2]

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 41.

[2] *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, Oxford 1924, p. 296.

James, the Macpherson of Ossian fame, copied almost every word of his so-called history from the work of his fellow-clansman John; both of them wrote enthusiastically against the proposition that the Scots had originally come from Ireland, 'a pious fraud,' wrote James, with an ignorance almost as amazing as his impertinence, 'which zealous missionaries such as Columba endeavoured to impose upon their converts.' This same Macpherson, ignorant as he was, and guilty of perpetrating the greatest literary fraud known to history, had the effrontery to write contemptuously of the 'impostures of the half-learned monks of the Middle Ages.'

Gibbon's flattery of this Highland humbug should be compared with the outspoken language of Pinkerton, who vigorously expressed his indignation at all this masquerade of scholarship.

With a rare frankness, Pinkerton declared that James Macpherson's 'Introduction to History' 'is as much fraught with falsehood and fable as his Erse poems,' and that Dr. John 'had not even an idea of what learning and science are. . . . He might just as well have written upon medicine or navigation.'[1]

Gibbon's eulogy of the Macphersons shows how both his selection and his judgment of authorities could be directed by unworthy influences. His neglect of Innes, whose work he must have known, at any rate by repute, is significant.

On this question of early Scottish history, of no importance to the great subject on which he was engaged, Gibbon assumes the attitude of a judge who has examined impartially all available evidence; a pose used perhaps in this instance to conceal ignorance. Gibbon knew nothing of Celtic history,

[1] *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland* (London 1789), pp. lxi–lxiii.

and his few pages on the subject contributed nothing but additional obscurity. The substance of what he wrote was taken straight from James or John Macpherson, who provided him with a pleasant opportunity for administering a rebuke to credulous monks.

The following extract from the 'Decline and Fall' will appear in a new light to readers who realise that it is a paraphrase of what Macpherson had written, adopted by Gibbon with just that sort of credulity for which, in others, he could seldom find an excuse:

'The highlanders . . . acquired the expressive name of Scots, which, in the Celtic tongue, is said to be equivalent to that of *wanderers* or *vagrants*. [This is Macpherson's idea.] . . . The missionaries of the Isle of Saints, who diffused the light of Christianity over North Britain, established the vain opinion [Macpherson again] that their Irish countrymen were the natural as well as the spiritual fathers of the Scottish race. The loose and obscure tradition has been preserved by the Venerable Bede, who scattered some rays of light over the darkness of the eighth century. On this slight foundation, a huge superstructure of fable was gradually reared by the bards and the monks; two orders of men who equally abused the privilege of fiction.' [1]

Here are all the characteristics of Gibbon's dialectical genius. His adjectives are moderate, the appeal to prejudice subdued; the reference to the Venerable Bede gives a slight but important impression of impartiality; and then he concludes by calling in the monks, who can always be trusted to raise a laugh and secure the desired verdict.

Until quite recently many educated people continued to regard the Middle Ages as a period of which superstition, credulity, and an uncritical reliance upon authority were the special characteristics. Yet during the first quarter, even the first half, of the

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. pp. 41–2.

nineteenth century, the critical faculty was as rare, and credulity as common, in Scotland as anywhere in medieval Europe.

Probably men in the Middle Ages had a more correct knowledge of their ancestors than nineteenth-century Scotland had of medievalism. Exactly how much a country loses when, through the extensive neglect of rational historical study, contact with the past has been severed, cannot easily be estimated. To many superficial minds the damage is invisible, but the misrepresentation of history is a matter which does not merely concern the descendants or successors of the misrepresented; it does not only concern modern monks that their predecessors in medieval Scotland were voted by the nineteenth century to have been lazy, useless fellows, a good riddance to the country. Nor is it only in the interest of Catholics that truth should be told about the Papacy and that Papal history should become something more than a catalogue of the crimes and blunders of Popes.

Why is it that in England and still more in Scotland, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, educated men remained ignorant of the real history of the Reformation in Germany, and were still blind to the position of the Papacy in pre-medieval Europe?

This state of the public mind was brought about by the enormous output and wide distribution of polemical books and tracts wherein was continued the policy of mud-slinging which had proved so successful in the hands of German Reformers.

'It is not many years,' wrote Cardinal Wiseman in 1841, 'since the condemnation of the entire line of succession in the Roman See was a matter of course in every Protestant work, theological, historical, philosophical, or moral, which directly or indirectly could bring it within its scope. . . . There were

no exceptions . . . the name of the Papacy was stigmatised with everything that was infamous, and anathematised with everything that was execrable.'[1]

This propaganda was not often in England or Scotland, any more than it had been with Luther, directed by a conscious disregard of truth. It was certainly accompanied by indifference to the rules of evidence and to the process of rational deduction. Consequently people who had been nourished on this kind of literature lost intellectual freedom; they learned to believe what they saw printed; they who welcomed the principle lost the power of private judgment.

The vast quantity of pseudo-historical books on the subject of Popery, printed in the eighteenth century, achieved their objective by the power of weight and number; a tradition was created for Gibbon to pick out of the mud and cast into a permanent literary form.

But behind the tradition polished by Gibbon there was always to be heard the voice of the Centuriators. That repercussions from Magdeburg were audible, were broadcasted, even in the nineteenth century, is not generally realised; for it is not often easy to discover the sources of information frequented by popular historians.

Among all the popular history books published in the first half of the nineteenth century none perhaps has had a wider circulation than Sir Walter Scott's 'Tales of a Grandfather.' The history taught in this book may be taken as representative of the best teaching current at the time of its publication (1828), and also of what has been taught since to Scottish children for generations. I propose, therefore,

[1] Review of Sismondi's *History of the Italian Republics*, 1832 (in *Dublin Review*, 1841, vol. xi. p. 506).

to inquire into the question of the sources from which originated the history of the Reformation, in particular, contained in the 'Tales of a Grandfather.' And first I must quote a long passage from that well-known work.

An unsound historical thesis is generally introduced by a hint or a suggestion of doubt about some fundamental point to which the writer has never applied his mind; and it is a common failing of uncritical minds to regard as permanently doubtful any fact about which a controversy has taken place, although that controversy may have ended in a decision.

Now the first important historical fact in the history of Christianity after the Resurrection is the presence of St. Peter in Rome. The fact is, and always has been, historically certain; but there are few things in history, however certain, which have not at some time been denied. An attack upon the truth that St. Peter went to Rome and was martyred in that city was engineered in the seventeenth century by Spanheim for professedly polemical reasons. Since then, historians who are enemies of the Roman See often, but not always, refer to the tradition as doubtful: doubtful because the subject of a controversy.

Gibbon, who was too well informed to venture upon a direct negative, did as much harm as he could to the truth by suggesting a wholly unjustified doubt:

'The banks of the Tiber were *supposed* to have been honoured with the preaching and martyrdom of the two most eminent among the apostles. The journey of St. Peter to Rome, mentioned by most of the ancients, maintained by all the Catholics, allowed by some Protestants, has been vigorously attacked by Spanheim.'[1]

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. pp. 45, 46.

'A vague tradition was embraced that two Jewish teachers, a tent-maker and a fisherman, had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero; and at the end of five hundred years their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome.'[1]

Although the fact of St. Peter's visit to and martyrdom at Rome rests on an unbroken tradition, was unquestioned until the sixteenth century, and has been confirmed recently by monumental evidence, the malicious suggestion of Gibbon that the story had been concocted by the ever-active 'cunning ecclesiastic' was readily accepted by the uncritical historians of the nineteenth century, and, in some circles, prevails even at the present day.[2] It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the summary of Christian history contained in the 'Tales of a Grandfather' starts with the insinuation that the presence of St. Peter in Rome, a certain and supremely important fact of history, is nothing more than a vague and uncertain tradition. Scott was writing for children. His teaching was regarded at the time as rational and moderate. I am going to quote a long extract from his famous history book, italicising

[1] *Decline and Fall*, vol. v. pp. 32, 33.

[2] In the *Westminster Gazette* for March 16, 1914, Professor J. H. Morgan, in a friendly criticism of Lord Haldane's lecture to the students of London University, speaks of the usefulness of falsehood in history. He produced as an example of a 'useful' falsehood the tradition that SS. Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom at Rome, and quoted with approval Baur's remark that 'the historical interest of the story lies precisely in its unhistorical character . . . a tradition so entirely void of historical foundation must have been designed to serve some particular historian.' Professor Morgan admires Baur's eagerness to 'know what object animated the ingenious liar.'

I only quote all this as an example of the way history was being taught to the public but a few years ago. To assert that the tradition of St. Peter in Rome is unhistorical is preposterous. A determined opponent of the Papacy might maintain on *a priori* grounds that the story was improbable or had been circulated for controversial advantage; but no critic acquainted with the facts could say that the tradition was unhistorical, that it did not go back to Apostolic times.

the most incorrect passages because they are the ones most likely to have influenced the impressionable minds of his young readers.

'After the death of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, the doctrine which He preached was planted in Rome, the principal city of the great Roman empire, by the Apostle Peter, *as it is said*, whom the Catholics, therefore, term the first bishop of Rome. In process of time, the bishops of Rome, who succeeded, *as they said*, the apostle in his office, claimed an authority over all others in Christendom. Good and well-meaning persons . . . admitted these pretensions without much scrutiny. . . . The Popes . . . went on, by degrees, introducing into the simple and beautiful system delivered to us in the gospel, other doctrines, many of them inconsistent with, or contradictory of, pure Christianity. . . . We shall notice two or three of these innovations. . . . The Roman Church *imputed to relics, which were often a mere imposture, the power, which God alone possesses*, of altering those laws of nature which His wisdom has appointed. . . .

'But the most important innovation, and that by which the priests made most money, was the belief that . . . the priests had power to forgive sins . . . Masses and prayers could only be obtained by money, and all this money went to the priests. But the Pope and his clergy carried the matter still farther; and not only sold, as they pretended, the forgiveness of Heaven, to those who had committed sins, but also granted them (always for money) a liberty to break through the laws of God and the Church. These licences were called indulgences, *because those who purchased them were indulged in the privilege of committing irregularities and vices, without being supposed answerable to the divine wrath.* . . . If a layman read the Bible, he was accounted guilty of a great offence; for the priests well knew that a perusal of the Sacred Scriptures would open men's minds to their extravagant pretensions . . . . But the discovery of the art of printing began, in the fifteenth century, to open men's minds. The Bible, which had been locked up in the hands of the clergy, then became common . . . and wise and good men, in Germany and Switzerland, made it their study to expose the errors and corruptions of the See of Rome. The doctrine of Saint-worship was shown to be idolatrous, that of

pardons and indulgences a *foul encouragement to vice*—that of Purgatory a cunning means of extorting money, and the pretensions of the Pope to infallibility a *blasphemous assumption of the attributes proper to God alone.* These new opinions were termed the doctrines of the Reformers. . . . The Roman Catholic priests attempted to defend the tenets of their Church by argument; but as that was found difficult, they endeavoured, in most countries of Europe, to enforce them by violence. But the Reformers found protection in various parts of Germany. Their numbers seemed to increase rather than diminish, and to promise a great revolution in the Christian world.' [1]

It is difficult to realise that this extract has not been taken from a tract published by the Hope Trust, that this was the sort of history taught all over Scotland and accepted as a fair and moderate [2] statement of the facts, even in the second half of the nineteenth century. 'The "Tales of a Grandfather,"' wrote Bishop Forbes (of Brechin) in 1873, 'is a book equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom, and the nursery; it is adopted as the happiest of manuals, not only in Scotland, but wherever the English language is spoken.'

And Dean Stanley calls Sir Walter Scott 'one of the great religious teachers of Scottish Christendom.' [3]

No modern Scottish historian has, as far as I know, made any public protest against the false history contained in this chapter from the 'Tales of a Grandfather.' There may have existed, and there may still exist, Catholics ignorant enough to impute

[1] *Tales of a Grandfather* (Edinburgh, 1869, Adam & Charles Black), pp. 97, 98, 99.

[2] Sir Walter has been accused of a too great kindness to 'popery.' George Borrow makes his Priest exclaim: 'O Cavaliere Gualtiero, avete fatto molto in favore della Santa Sede!' And the Scholar to reply: 'If he has, he has done it unwittingly; I never heard before that he was a favourer of the popish delusion. "Only in theory" said the man in black.' *Lavengro*, London, 1900 (1st ed. 1851), p. 503.

[3] *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, 1872, p. 166.

to relics 'the power which God alone possesses,' for among every large body of people, at any period of history, there will always be found a considerable number who are extremely ignorant and stupid. But to say that the Christian Church taught such a doctrine is untrue; and to say so without making the slightest effort to get at the facts, to repeat such an absurd calumny for the benefit of young children, would, in an historian of any standing, be regarded as a professional misdemeanour.

It is true that, in the history of the Church, fanatics have sometimes paid an exaggerated deference to the power and authority of the Popes. A party of extremists in the fourteenth century 'exalted the Pope into a kind of demi-god, with absolute authority over the whole world.' [1]

And in recent times Louis Veuillot, the French ultramontane, practically equated the Pope to God.[2]

It is also true that simony disfigures the history of the Church from the earliest times and was openly practised by certain venal Popes of the fourteenth century. But to identify the vices of individual Catholics, even of individual Popes, with the teaching of the Catholic Church, is absurd.

Of course, it may be said that all the story about the Roman system being blasphemous and idolatrous, etc., is after all a matter of opinion; what may seem blasphemous to one mind may seem quite proper and reverent to another. This reply, however, would completely miss the point of the charge which lies against such historians as Sir Walter Scott, and indeed against almost the whole of educated Scotland during the nineteenth century.

[1] L. Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Eng. tr., 4th ed., vol. i. p. 80.
[2] Ward's *Life of Newman*, vol. ii. p. 212.

It is a principle good in ethics and in law that, when a false statement has been made, ignorance cannot be pleaded in excuse if it can be shown that knowledge of the truth was easily accessible. Now, in the extract which I have quoted from the 'Tales of a Grandfather,' there is one statement which is not merely an exaggeration, or a mistaken opinion, or the expression of a particular point of view, but which is quite clearly and distinctly a falsehood. It is a falsehood taught throughout Scotland for generations by historians who could easily have discovered the truth had they taken the smallest trouble to examine the facts.

I refer to Sir Walter Scott's incorrect account of indulgences. This persistence of the indulgence myth [1] could have been possible only among a people who as a result of a long process of historical misrepresentation had lost all critical sense and all independence of thought.

That the legend should still flourish in nineteenth-century Scotland shows how successful had been the historical campaign against the old religion initiated by Luther and organised by the Centuriators of Magdeburg.

'This untruth' [that Tetzel sold indulgences for sins not yet committed], 'clearly confuted as it was by the facts, passed from Luther's lips to those of his disciples. . . . Luther's friend, Frederick Myconius, helped to spread the same falsehood throughout Germany by embodying it in his

[1] Then from the pulpit overhead,
Tetzel the monk, with fiery glow,
Thundered upon the crowd below,
'Good people all, draw near!' he said,
'Purchase these letters, signed and sealed,
By which all sins, though unrevealed
And unrepented, are forgiven!'

Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

"Historia Reformationis," 1542, whilst in Switzerland, Henry Bullinger, who also promoted it, expressly refers [to Luther] as his authority. In this way Luther's misrepresentations infected his whole circle, nor can we be surprised if in this, as in so many similar instances, the falsehood has held the field even to our own day.' [1]

Most people would allow that the system of indulgences lends itself readily to abuse; but a dislike or disapproval of the custom of attributing, by what Gibbon called 'a fantastic arithmetic,' material value or measurement to prayers and spiritual exercises is not an excuse for describing such a practice in words which constitute a very definite falsehood.

What Sir Walter Scott wrote in the 'Tales of a Grandfather' about the history of the Reformation is a pious fiction which can be placed on the same historical level as many of the medieval religious romances and fairy tales. Modern critics who have recommended this children's history book should at least have warned 'the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom, and the nursery' against the description of the historians of the Reformation as 'wise and good men . . . who made it their study to expose the errors and corruptions of Rome.' There can be little doubt that these words are a translation of part of the title of the ecclesiastical history written at Magdeburg 'per aliquot studiosos et pios viros.'

Such a description is still accepted in many quarters by people who do not know anything of the muddy battlefields of sixteenth-century polemics. The first of the 'wise and good men,' first both in day and importance (the Centuriators copied much from his work), was John Turmair, commonly known as Aventin (†1534). 'Of deliberate falsification,'

[1] Hartmann Grisar, *Luther* (London, 1915), vol. iv. p. 84.

wrote Janssen, 'he can by no means be acquitted . . . (vol. xiii. p. 429), we are almost driven to the assumption that utterances of such savage passions must have been written under the influence of drink . . . . Aventin was himself frequently a victim of intemperance. His own memoirs leave no doubt on the subject.' [1]

'To strike a blow at the clerics,' writes Füter, 'he did not hesitate to make the wildest accusations or to proffer the most indecent insults. He even goes the length of forgery. His invective might have been borrowed from the Centuriators.' [2]

How often these 'wise and good men in Germany and Switzerland' exposed 'the errors and corruptions of Rome' by means of forgeries was discussed with moderation by Janssen, as regards the Centuriators of Magdeburg, in vol. x. c. i. pp. 71, 81, and as regards Aventin, in vol. xiii. c. iii. pp. 425–435, of his 'History of the German People' (Engl. tr.).

The antiquity of the falsehoods contained in the 'Tales of a Grandfather' is well brought out by the protest of Bartholomew Kleindienst, who in 1560 wrote indignantly against exactly the same kind of misrepresentations; he takes particular notice of the calumny repeated by Sir Walter Scott, 'that if a layman read the Bible he was guilty of a great offence.'

'Some of the leaders of sects are such impudent liars as . . . to persuade the poor people to believe that we Catholics . . . no longer think anything of Christ, but worship the Saints, not merely as friends of God, but as gods themselves; nay we look upon the Pope as our God . . . we have no proper Bible and should be unable to read it if we had [3] . . .

[1] Janssen, vol. xiii. p. 435.

[2] *Histoire de l'historiographie*, p. 240.

[3] I do not know to what extent the Bible, written in the vulgar tongue, was in general use in the sixteenth century. Benvenuto

Numberless suchlike horrible, blasphemous and hitherto unheard-of lies they invent and use against us . . . *whereby they render the Papacy an abomination to simple and otherwise well-disposed folk.*' [1]

Kleindienst, who had himself for a short time joined the Reformers, here hits the nail on the head.

Although it would be absurd to suggest that Scott, or indeed any historian of nineteenth-century Scotland, was a conscious liar, it must be admitted that writers who transmit false information without taking all possible precautions to ascertain the truth cannot be acquitted of a breach of the commandment which says 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.'

There is a certain perversion of the will, a determination to believe evil rather than good, which is almost as immoral, and often quite as harmful, as conscious mendacity. To understand how it was that these misrepresentations could have survived for such a length of time (they are not yet entirely expurgated from the current textbooks), it is necessary to go back again to the Centuriators of Magdeburg, to that group of learned yet fanatical scholars who, at the inspiration of Luther, determined to make history the servant of polemics. Although the ecclesiastical history written by the Centuriators has never been published in English, and the authors of that work were perhaps never familiar by name to the majority of the English-speaking race, Magdeburg was nevertheless the source from which was drawn

Cellini states, in his Autobiography, that on one occasion when in prison he asked for some books and was given his own 'bible in the vulgar tongue.' *Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (London, 1771), vol. i. p. 481.

[1] H. Grisar, *Luther*, vol. iv. p. 95. So successful in England was this untruthful propaganda that by the middle of the nineteenth century the Papacy had become an 'abomination' not only to 'simple' but also to otherwise well-educated folk. 'Allow me to tell you,' wrote Charlotte Brontë, 'that there are some Catholics who are as good as any Christians can be *to whom the Bible is a sealed book.*' E. C. Gaskell, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, London 1857, vol. i. p. 268.

the Church history taught to the people of England and Scotland for nearly three hundred years.

During all that time, that is from 1563 to well on into the nineteenth century, this one-sided presentation of history was taught throughout Britain almost uncontradicted. It is true that the names of the Centuriators were seldom mentioned. Their work was carried on and popularised by John Foxe. The fact has not hitherto been noticed, writes Füter, that the famous 'Book of Martyrs' contains a considerable amount of matter taken from the Magdeburg historians.

The 'Acts and Monuments of the Christian Martyrs,' as it was first printed in 1559, a wholly unreliable account of the persecution suffered by the Protestants, became when translated into English, and published at London in 1563, a more or less complete history of the Church. The new matter then introduced was taken from the work of the Centuriators which had just made its appearance. The book became at once popular and has always been known as 'The Book of Martyrs.' Perhaps no history book written in the sixteenth century, or for long after, has had such a wide circulation. Besides the many different editions, a large number of tracts were published, especially during the eighteenth century, which consist of either abridgments or wholesale plagiarisms of Foxe's work.[1] '"The Book of Martyrs,"' writes Füter, 'was officially adopted by the English Church[2] and, although

[1] 'Abridgements of this inflammatory work are annually issued from the London presses, under the title of *The Book of Martyrs*.' The Rev. John Milner, *Letters to a Prebendary*, Cork, 1800 (written in 1799).

[2] This statement is not an exaggeration. The Rev. G. Townsend, in his introduction to the edition of 1843, wrote that the *Book of Martyrs* was 'the last book which was commanded by the sovereign, sanctioned by the bishops, and ordered by a canon of the Anglican Convocation to be placed in the hall of every episcopal palace in the land' (*Acts and Monuments*, etc., London, 8 vols., vol. i. p. 3).

repudiated by the Anglican reaction of the seventeenth century, remained, even under the Stuarts . . . the only book wherein the masses obtained their information about Church history.' Not until the middle of the nineteenth century did Foxe begin to lose his place as a reliable source of ecclesiastical history.[1] The final blow which knocked the 'Book of Martyrs' from its pedestal was delivered by S. R. Maitland, who described the edition produced by the Rev. S. Cattley, in 1841, as a 'disgrace to the literary character of England.'[2]

Through John Foxe, the Centuriators of Magdeburg have had an influence upon the formation of historical opinion in England which has never been fully recognised; in Scotland the 'Book of Martyrs' was utilised by John Knox, and accepted without suspicion by many subsequent historians.

Sir Walter Scott, however, as I have shown above, almost certainly went straight to the parent spring, to the 'wise and good men' of Magdeburg. He handed on to the children of the nineteenth century calumnies that were almost ready to celebrate a third centenary. The return to 'sound learning' was not yet; the 'discovery of printing' had not proved sufficient of itself to 'open men's minds'; it was still true, as Lord Hailes had said long ago, that the Scots had reformed indeed from Popery but not from Hector Boece.

[1] In the Vatican '"there lives a strange kind of priest whom men call the Pope, a very horrible old individual . . ."

'"Ay, Ay," said I, "I have read of him in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*,"' *Lavengro*, p. 136 (1st ed., 1851).

[2] Even within recent times attempts have been made to minimise the vices of Foxe. I find the following insufficient warning in *An Introduction to the Study of English History*, 4th ed., 1903, p. 309, by S. R. Gardiner and J. B. Mullinger: 'Foxe's representations are largely coloured by his feelings as a partisan . . . comparatively few of his statements have been disproved.'

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN SCOTLAND

Analysis of some popular history books: Pryce, Grub, Hill Burton—The *a priori* method.

An awakening among Scotsmen of a critical interest in their early religious history can be dated to Dr. W. F. Skene (1809–1901), who attempted for the first time to put the facts about early Christianity in Scotland into historical form.[1]

Skene knew how a history should be written; he was equipped to carry out the work, but as Dr. John Mackintosh has said: 'His mind was narrow and glimmering . . . he had very little of the critical faculty.'[2]

This historian found that the problem of what the religion was that his ancestors professed from the sixth to the eleventh century had long been an occasion for clerical combat, and he used the consequent difficulty of getting at the truth as a pretext for shirking the issue, and leaving the brethren to fight the matter out among themselves. It is worth repeating what he wrote upon this point:

'The history of the early church in Scotland . . . has become the battlefield on which Catholic and Protestant, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, have contended for their respective tenets . . . People are tired, however, of this incessant repetition of the same one-sided arguments, and partial statement of authorities adduced to assimilate the early Celtic church, in its doctrine and constitution, to one or other of the great ecclesiastical parties of the modern church. . . . [The

[1] *Celtic Scotland*, 3 vols, 1876–80.

[2] Quoted by D. Hay Fleming, *Critical Reviews relating chiefly to Scotland*, London, 1912, p. 15.

Author] has been unable to touch, to any great extent, upon its doctrinal history, or to attempt to exhibit its theological characteristics. The discussion of these questions must still be left to the polemical historians.' [1]

Dr. Skene has proffered a poor excuse for his neglect of an obvious duty. It was certainly true that people had at last begun to tire of partial history, and that some of them wanted to be told the truth. But, because there has been a controversy, conducted on all sides with very little sense, it is not permissible for an historian to assume, as Skene did, that the problem involved must be insoluble, or unsuitable for critical examination. No one surely would deny that there can be no more important part of the history of a Church than its doctrinal and theological characteristics? If these are not known, how can a history be written? Skene shirked inquiry; it is hard not to conclude that he was shrewd enough to foresee the inevitable consequence. The fact is that Scottish writers at this time had begun to see that the appeal to history called for in the sixteenth century would cut both ways, and they were prepared to stop proceedings in any direction likely to produce unwelcome results. An ingenious piece of dialectic is the formula for closing the case about the early Scottish Church, proposed by Mackintosh:

'In vain have contending parties striven to show that [the form of Christianity in Scotland] was Roman, Episcopal, or Presbyterial, it was neither the one nor the other [*sic*], as they are understood and fixed in the creeds and polities of modern times.' [2]

There is an appearance of neutrality about this paragraph calculated to appeal strongly, as it undoubtedly did, both to people who were tired of

[1] Preface to *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. p. vii.

[2] *History of Civilisation in Scotland* (London and Edinburgh, 1878), vol. i. p. 124.

the controversy and to those who had begun to be nervous as to the issue. But the question to be answered is whether Christianity in early Scotland was or was not a different religion from the Christianity of contemporary Europe. This is a question historians of the Scottish Church have got to deal with, and it should not be mixed up with a discussion on continuity.

Skene declared in his preface to 'Celtic Scotland' that he would leave all doctrinal and theological discussions about the character of the early Scottish Church 'to the polemical historians.' Nevertheless he assumes throughout his book that the early Church in Scotland had always been independent of, if not hostile to, the Papacy, and the whole of his historical work is governed by that hypothesis, as I shall presently show.

With this hypothesis all educated Scotland was satisfied, for it formed the basis of all the ecclesiastical history written in the country during the nineteenth century. The public did not even notice that a point, which it was the proper business of an historian to prove, had invariably been taken for granted. That the religion of St. Columba and his monks was as distinct, though perhaps not in the same degree, from the form and spirit of the religion of Rome as the modern Presbyterian is distinct from the modern Catholic, was and still is the belief of a majority of the Scottish people.

This proposition was not regarded as an opinion, or as a thesis put forward for discussion, but it expressed a first principle to be used as a foundation upon which all historical work must rest: a principle held by most Scotsmen to be so obviously true that proof was never asked or expected. Owing to the usually unscientific character of the popular literature on the history of religion in Scotland, it is difficult

to show, without a mass of quotations, that this principle had become instinctive with a majority of historians. The difficulty of illustration is increased by the fact that among writers of the first rank, although the truth of the proposition is assumed, it is seldom formally stated.

I have selected the work of three distinguished historians, all three among the most respected of their date, and will quote briefly from each to show how all three accepted as a fact, not requiring proof, that there was an essential difference between the religion of the early Scots and the faith of sixth-century Europe: Pryce, the author of a popular and well-informed 'History of the British Church' (London, 1878)[1]; Grub, whose talent and rectitude cannot be questioned; Hill Burton, undeservedly called by many critics 'Scotland's impartial historian.' All three held this proposition, not as an opinion to be established by research, but as a first principle of historical truth, the pivot, the *leitmotiv*, round which their history should be written.

I will prove my point as regards Pryce by quoting his comments on the 'Life of Ninian,' written in the twelfth century by Ailred of Rievaulx. About Ninian there is very little that is certainly known. The probable facts are given by Bede, who, writing three hundred years after the events, is only professing to give the tradition current in his own day.

Bede wrote as follows:

> 'The southern Picts had . . . it is said . . . received the true faith by the preaching of Bishop Ninian . . . who had been regularly instructed at Rome in the faith.'

There exists no other reliable written testimony to the activities of Ninian. The Life written by

[1] 'Adjudged to be the best on the ancient British Church of the essays submitted for competition at the National Eisteddfod of 1876.' (Author's Preface, p. v.)

Ailred in the twelfth century for the edification of his monks has little historical value, although it purports to be based on an ancient text. Among the stories told by Ailred is one which represents Bishop Ninian as expressing a wish to return to Rome with the words, 'Et ubi fides Petri nisi in sede Petri? illuc certe illuc mihi eundum est.'

Pryce comments as follows:

> 'In harmony with the prevailing tone of the twelfth century, Ailred expands the journey to Rome, giving expression to what the age would suppose to be the natural sentiment of St. Ninian towards the Roman See.' [1]

The suggestion, of course, is that the words 'Ubi fides Petri nisi in sede Petri?' reflect sentiments which belong not to St. Ninian and the fifth century but to Ailred and the twelfth. That such sentiments could not have been those of the fifth century is regarded by Pryce as something so evident that no one could call it in question.

It is important to notice exactly the mentality betrayed by this comment of the English scholar, because it is frequently to be met with in contemporary literature; that Ailred was an unsafe witness is undeniable; he wrote six hundred years after the event, not as an historian, but as a monk wishing to edify his brethren. Yet Pryce's objection to the wording of St. Ninian's wish to return to Rome is based, not on the untrustworthiness of Ailred, but on the assumed improbability of St. Ninian's desire to return to the Holy City, the centre of Christianity.

Whether or not Ninian returned to Rome is historically doubtful; that he may have wished to return, and that he might have expressed that wish in the words given by Ailred, is historically probable.

[1] *History of the British Church*, p. 105.

Surely, since St. Ambrose in the fourth century could write 'ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia,' Bishop Ninian, educated and consecrated at Rome, might well have used the echo of this sentiment ascribed to him by Ailred.

In a comment on the life of Kentigern, written by another twelfth-century monk, Jocelyn of Furness, Grub betrays a mentality identical to that of Pryce. St. Kentigern is one of the shadow saints of Celtic history. He was born perhaps in 514, and his name is associated with the place where Glasgow now stands. The personality of Kentigern has been almost obliterated by the misdirected enthusiasm of his monastic biographer. The legendary story which Jocelyn transcribed is the type familiar to readers of medieval hagiography. There is, however, one incident in his description of St. Kentigern's death which is not only improbable but unusual, if not unique, in legendary story, and may therefore be taken as some remnant of a real fact in the shape which had reached the biographer six hundred years after. St. Kentigern died, says Jocelyn, in a bath, and after his death a number of monks got into the same water, one after the other, 'and went to sleep in the Lord.' The ingenious suggestion has been made that this tale represents the mutilated fact that St. Kentigern and several of his monks died of some contagious disease. In any case, the story as repeated by Jocelyn is absurd.

Now the curious thing that Grub did, in commenting on the monk's description of Kentigern's death, was to pick out as most improbable the only incident which is intrinsically likely to be true. Grub wrote as follows:

'Hardly any part of Jocelyn's work is so absurd as his conclusion . . . When we are informed that [Kentigern] gave

special instructions for observing the laws and customs of the Holy Roman Church, the mother of all churches, we see at once that Jocelyn is using the language of a later age and attributing its opinions to St. Kentigern.'[1]

Grub and his readers 'see at once' that it is nonsense to suppose that anyone in sixth-century Britain could have spoken with reverence on his death-bed of the laws of the 'Holy Roman Church,' or could have used such a phrase (late medieval, of course) as 'The mother of all churches.'

Grub does not argue; he does not even emphasise the point; he merely refers in passing to the obvious absurdity of putting twelfth-century language into the mouth of sixth-century Kentigern. Whether or not St. Kentigern actually used the words attributed to him by his biographer is a matter of little importance. Jocelyn was quite capable of having invented most of the death scene out of his own head. Probably he transferred Kentigern's last words from the biography of some later medieval saint. But the phrase which Grub picked out as the most incredible and absurd part of the story, the reference to the Holy Roman Church, the mother of all churches, is, in the mouth of a sixth-century British prelate, perfectly sensible, and in agreement with contemporary thought all over Europe.

There are many documents of the fourth and fifth centuries which express the idea of the Roman Church as the mother of all churches. There are three well known to most students of the period.

1. In the synodal epistle[2] of the First Council of Arles held in 314 the assembled bishops, addressing

[1] *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1861), vol. i. p. 39.

[2] 'Communi copula caritatis et unitate matris ecclesiae Catholicae vinculo inhaerentes, ad Arelatensium civitatem piissimi imperatoris voluntate adducti, inde te, gloriosissime papa, commerita reverentia salutamus.' Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio*, tom. ii. p. 470.

the Pope, described themselves as 'United in the bond of our communion and of the union of our mother the Catholic Church.'

Grub may not have been familiar with the text of this letter, signed by three British bishops, a text which has been extensively mistranslated, notably by Collier and Stillingfleet, in the interests of a polemical thesis.

2. For a clear declaration that the Roman Church is the head of all churches, there is a sentence in the History of the African persecutions by Victor Vitensis (middle of fifth century) which refers to the 'Ecclesia Romana, quae caput est omnium ecclesiarum.' [1]

3. Grub also forgot the letter written to the Pope by the Irish Abbot Cummian in the seventh century on the Paschal question. Cummian suggests that the dispute might be settled by sending certain wise men to Rome 'as children to their mother.' [2]

In these three extracts, all of early date—Gallic, African, Celtic—the Roman Church is spoken of in language identical in sentiment to that attributed by Jocelyn to St. Kentigern. It is absurd to suggest that the words 'The Holy Roman Church, the mother of all churches,' do not belong as much to the sixth as to the twelfth century.

It is also quite clear that Pryce and Grub, and probably most of their readers and pupils, held the strange principle, which no text, however authentic, was allowed to contradict, that the inhabitants of these islands, in the fifth and sixth centuries, looked at the See of Rome through post-Reformation spectacles.

Historians can profess to be in doubt as to the fact of papal supremacy in the Christian Church

[1] Mon. Germ. Hist., *Historia Persecutionis Africanae Provinciae*, Auct. Antiquiss. tom. iii. p. 23.

[2] 'Misimus quos novimus sapientes et humiles esse, velut natos ad matrem.' *Ep. Cummiani Hiberni de Contr. Pasch.*, P.L. 87, col. 977.

from the fifth to the eighth century, only by refusing to read the documents of that period. In the third volume of letters published in the Collection 'Monumenta Germaniae Historica,'[1] which covers the correspondence between Gaul and Rome from the fifth to the eighth century, there are seventeen direct and definite statements, indexed in the said volume by Gundlach, under the heading 'The Roman Church is the Head of all the churches.'[2] Moreover, in the eighth century a Pope uses the actual words which Jocelyn put into the mouth of St. Kentigern, and which Grub recognised 'at once' as language not earlier than the twelfth century: 'The Holy Roman Church, the mother of all churches' (sancta omnium ecclesiarum Dei mater et caput, fundamentum fidei christiane, Romana ecclesia).[3]

My purpose here, however, is not to prove what all impartial observers admit, that the Church of Rome was regarded by the whole of Christendom from the fifth to the eighth century as the 'mother of all churches,' but to emphasise the fact that British historians in the nineteenth century refused even to look at the available evidence on this point. These writers held positions which justified the implication, drawn by all their readers and pupils, that they had devoted years of study to the examination of the sources of history. They were trusted by the public who had no other teachers and no means of getting access to the facts.

The error of Pryce and Grub may be found running

[1] Epist. iii., Ep. Mer. et Kar. aevi.

[2] M.G.H., Ep. iii. p. 740 (Index Nominum). 'Romana ecclesia, caput omnium ecclesiarum totius mundi,' . . . (19, 7. 33, 12. 47, 7. 501, 12. 504, 16. 545, 28. 549, 6. 557, 21. 575, 15. 602, 30. 629, 25. 636, 5. 637, i. 641, 35. 645, 48. 647, 34. 713, 22.)

[3] Stephanus II. papa Pippino regi (757). M.G.H., Ep. vol. iii. p. 504.

through nearly all the Scottish ecclesiastical history written in the nineteenth century. Even such an historian as Dowden, Bishop of the Scottish Episcopal Church in Edinburgh, could not escape from the all-pervading fog of popular prejudice.

In dealing with the history of Christianity in primitive Scotland, where data are scarce, the importance of sound judgment is supreme, and the effect of a little prejudice may be disastrous. Like so many of his contemporaries, Dowden was almost completely lacking in historical vision. History for him was one everlasting nineteenth century.

His comment on the journey of Ninian to Rome illustrates effectively the mid-Victorian mentality.

> 'The wish felt by Ninian to receive his training at Rome was as natural as would be the desire of some intelligent and eager Kaffir youth from our South African mission field, to gain the advantage of the theological training that might be had at Oxford or Cambridge or some other of the centres of Anglican Church life.' [1]

In the room where these words were written there surely must have hung a copy of that well-known engraving of a youthful and exceedingly beautiful Queen Victoria handing out a copy of the Bible to a neatly dressed, well-groomed, coloured potentate!

What had clearly been in the mind of Pryce and Grub, and almost the whole educated public of Scotland, what reconciled all these people to the visit of Ninian to Rome, was expressed by Dowden without any reserve:

> 'The Bishops of Rome had not then put forward the monstrous pretensions to universal jurisdiction that appear in later days.' [2]

[1] *The Celtic Church in Scotland* (London, 1894), p. 25.
[2] Dowden, *op. cit.* p. 29.

We are here still in the twilight of sixteenth-century polemics. But the statement would be accepted as true by many educated Scotsmen even at the present day, although the evidence for a universal *Jurisdiction* of the Papacy in the fifth and sixth centuries is as decisive as any reasonable person could wish.

There is, of course, a distinction between the right of authority and its exercise. The difference between the Church of the sixth century and that of the present day in respect to the position of the Papacy is not in the right but in the exercise of authority. The point is made clear by Duchesne in his last volume on the early history of the Church :

'L'Église romaine, si bien établie que fût sa primauté, n'exerçait pas alors en fait, et ne réclamait nullement, dans les patriarcats d'Orient, ni même dans beaucoup de régions de l'Occident, l'autorité qu'elle exerce maintenant dans le monde catholique de toute langue et de toute obédience politique.' [1]

In Scotland during the nineteenth century, historians were as a rule unable to obtain any clear idea of the Papacy in history, even when they consulted the documents, owing to their dislike of the institution itself. And in no case has the detrimental effect of this sentiment on the processes of historical inquiry been more clearly evident than in the work of Hill Burton—Scotland's 'most impartial historian.' The impartiality of Hill Burton was not understood outside Scotland. A different appreciation of this writer was given by Victor Tourneur in his 'Esquisse d'une Histoire des Études Celtiques' (Liége, 1905) :

'The two principal historians of Scotland in the nineteenth century were Burton and Skene. . . . Burton was not really

[1] *L'Église au VI^e Siècle*, p. 268.

a historian . . . he was lacking in accuracy and in the critical faculty' (p. 105).

When writing the history of early Christianity in Scotland, Hill Burton copied most of the errors of his predecessors, as Skene was one of the first to point out; but his mistakes of detail, or rather his repetition of other people's mistakes, is a small affair, for mistakes, however numerous, can always be corrected; but when the whole framework of a book has been built upon a false assumption, and when that book has been welcomed by a whole nation as a masterpiece of historical sense and moderation, the damage is almost irreparable. I have suggested that many historians of the nineteenth century have used their antipathy to the Papacy as the test and measure of the reliability of the sources of history; if the documents did not agree with the principles, then the documents and not the principles had to be altered.

Hill Burton explicitly advocates this procedure. I quote, in spite of its tiresome conceit, the greater part of a long footnote from Hill Burton's first volume of the 'History of Scotland,' at the conclusion of which he encourages his students and readers in plain unmistakable language to reverse the laws of historical evidence. The opening sentence gives a clear impression of the narrow and self-satisfied world in which and for which this history was written:

'With all desire to avoid the unseemly practice of fighting the battles of Protestantism in history by carping at the Ecclesiastical system of the Middle Ages, there is one point on which the layman, brought up in the principles of the Reformation, must take his stand against it, if we would fairly give the history of still earlier Christianity. The ecclesiastical historian of that school was bound to believe that all the complex articulation of the system of which he found himself a part in the thirteenth or fourteenth century had existed

from the beginning; the untrammelled student knows that it is the creation of time and design. The ecclesiastic had to obey the Church, and if the Church told him that such things were of old, he must believe accordingly. . . .'[1]

Already there are four or five statements here which few historians at the present day would care to be found guilty of putting into print; and there are six different fallacies employed. Hill Burton then continues with an account of the medieval Church, which reads as if it had been taken direct from Mosheim, in order to rub well in the assertion that

'one cannot trust the ecclesiastical historians as correctly rendering events removed to any distance back from their own age.'

It is difficult to allow this paragraph to go on without interrupting. History is not a question of trust, but of proof. Ecclesiastical historians are in the same boat as the laymen, even as those brought up in the principles of the Reformation: you prove their worth by internal and external evidence, and accord such confidence as your examination of their work seems to justify. And even when you have caught your ecclesiastic at his tricks and he has forfeited your confidence, you cannot therefore be always sure that everything he has written will be untrue. You cannot safely assume that he will always be forging and inventing; or that he will invariably argue from unproved assumptions; or that he will always reject documentary evidence whenever it suits him to do so. Truth must after all be sometimes more edifying than fiction. But Hill Burton says that he writes as a 'layman brought up in the principles of the Reformation.' I do not know what kind of principles those may be, but they are certainly not the principles of historical criticism,

[1] *History of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 245–6.

for the conclusion of the discursive passage I am quoting reads as follows :

> 'Dealing merely with the early Irish and Columbate [*sic*] church, the inquirer gets gradually into the practice of considering it evidence, either that a work belongs to a late period, or that it has been tampered with, if he finds in it . . . the acknowledgement of the supremacy of the See of Rome.'

So, if the documents will not conform to the prejudice, the documents must be scrapped.

At the back of Hill Burton's mind was the same disorder that accounts for the instinctive conviction which told Pryce that St. Ninian could not have wished to return to Rome as to the centre of Christendom ; and which led Grub to mock at the suggestion that before the twelfth century Rome should have been spoken of as the 'mother of all Churches.'

History depends on documents : 'Pas de documents ; pas d'histoire.'

The test of textual authenticity is an operation which belongs almost entirely to the domain of science, and has nothing to gain from the literary skill, the sentiments, or the active imagination of students, whether 'untrammelled' or shackled by superstition ; or even from the solemn lectures of laymen 'brought up in the principles of the Reformation.'

That the early Church in Scotland was outside the Christian unity of the sixth century has long been a settled conviction not only in Scotland but also in England. This conviction, encouraged by national sentiment, supported by three hundred years of tradition, can call as witness to its truth a numerically imposing array of names, some of them famous, others unknown to great historical literature. The weight of testimony is overwhelming. What that

testimony was worth, how the tradition had grown, no one thought of inquiring. There seemed indeed no reason for an inquiry; no case to be brought to judgment; for there are few historical questions where the popular historians have been so unanimous. The notion of a Scottish Church, national and anti-papal, a continuous entity from the sixth to the nineteenth century, was an expression not so much of the popular mind as of the popular will.

Nearly all the celebrated historians, and all the historians who achieved large circulation, accepted this expression of the popular will as a first principle. Green, in his 'Short History,' describes what he calls the 'Celtic Church' as 'battling with Rome for the spiritual headship of Western Christendom.'[1] Michelet expresses the same idea in his 'Histoire de France' (vol. ii. p. 19): 'No Church of the Middle Ages remained longer independent of Rome than those of Ireland and Brittany.' Haddan, whose scholarship was superior to both these popular writers, bears still more determined witness: 'the assumption indeed of a British and Scotch Church independent of Rome, has established itself among historians generally.'[2] Among the lesser lights there is Mackenzie Walcott, who in his preface to 'Scoti-monasticon' (London, 1874) has shown how this tradition of early Church history has flattered national sentiment:

> 'As an Englishman I could not fail to feel a deep gratitude to that ancient Church of Scotland . . . the Church which even then opposed the claims of alien supremacy, *etc.*'[3]

The popular historians are unanimous, the text-books agree, and patriotism is satisfied; it is not

[1] *Short History of the English People* (London, 1892), vol. i. p. 65.
[2] Haddan's *Remains*, p. 262.
[3] *Scoti-monasticon*, Preface, p. vii.

surprising that nobody should have asked for proof, or should think of questioning an opinion supported by a chain of witnesses extending back almost unchallenged to the seventeenth century, each witness presumed to be independent. Who would suggest that popular historians are not always to be trusted; that they are not always independent witnesses; that they often copy from each other sentences, paragraphs, and even sometimes whole pages, without acknowledgment; that they are not always exempt, by reason of their learning, from the vices of ordinary men; from conceit and from self-deception; from false judgment and false reasoning; from a mental and sometimes an almost physical blindness to texts which they do not wish to see?

When in history an error has been repeatedly copied, and continuously taught in the schools, it acquires the status of truth. Criticisms or questionings are looked upon as attempts to disturb a vested interest, as a rebellious and improper interference with duly established order.

CHAPTER V

THE LIVING DOG.

Scarcity of data for the history of Celtic Christianity in Scotland—The Culdees and Scottish imagination—St. Columbanus: the growth of a myth—Dr. G. T. Stokes introduces the 'Living Dog.'

In reviewing as a whole the literature which has grown round the history of early Scottish Christianity it will become apparent that the course of historical study on this subject, both in Scotland and beyond, has been conducted on irrational lines; and has been so conducted not merely by the 'polemical historians' but by nearly all the scholars whose names have become familiar to the reading public during the greater part of the last century; and is being so conducted by men of good repute and honest purpose at the present day.

That in sixth-century Europe there were two separate Churches, the Celtic and the Roman, the first, in some way perhaps not always easy to define, an ancestor of the Reformation, has long been and is still the conviction of most educated Scotsmen. That St. Columba was the founder of a Church hostile to, or at least intolerant of, Roman jurisdiction, is stated or implied in all the popular textbooks.[1] The independence of the Scots, their self-determined

[1] And not only in the popular textbooks. To volume liv, *Statutes of the Scottish Church*, 1227–1559, published by the Scottish History Society, 1907, there is an introduction of 112 pages written by the Rev. D. Patrick, LL.D., with a confessional bias not often found in collections of documents intended for the use of scholars. One of the headings in the table of contents will suffice to indicate the objectionable tone of this publication:—'The Celtic Church in Scotland superseded by the Church of the Roman Catholic Obedience, page ix.'

isolation from the centre of Christendom until the twelfth century, was a proposition that no patriotic Scotsman could refuse to accept.

Not in vain had children been told for generations that the medieval Church had always encouraged ignorance, frowned upon freedom, and implicitly taught immorality. From such an institution it was only logical to suppose that both Saxon and Celt would have struggled to be free. This *a priori* argument was reinforced by the fact, known to the more learned, that when scholarship was declining on the Continent it flourished in Irish monasteries; that when morals were corrupt in Gaul they were pure in Ireland. The conclusion was obvious. Learning and morality flourished in Ireland and Scotland because those fortunate countries were far removed from Papal influence.

Many Scottish writers went so far as to claim that they had discovered at home in the sixth century the pure and primitive religion, unspotted by Bishops or Popes, which on the Continent, even in the earliest centuries, could not be clearly perceived. Such a state of opinion was not reached without the exercise of imagination in filling up historical blanks and ingenuity in handling the few available facts.

The records of early Scottish and Irish Christianity are scanty and disappointingly vague. The two chief sources are Adamnan and Bede; Adamnan, who was born not very long after the death of Columba and became Abbot of Iona, wrote a life of that saint with the object of making a picture which would be for all time a stimulus and an example to the monks and to the imperfectly cultured people among whom they lived.

Adamnan achieved his purpose. As a biographer he stands among the great. But he scarcely has

anything to say of current history either in or out of Scotland. His silences are tantalising but not unusual in his time and place.

'[Irish chroniclers] say almost nothing about institutions or about anything that is normal. . . . They are silent about matters of common knowledge in their time . . . and also as a rule about the institutional aspect, so to speak, of the events which they relate.'[1]

Only the vaguest hints are given by Adamnan of the institutional side of the religion practised at Iona.

More definite information can be obtained from Bede, though he too is unfortunately very brief. Ireland was not the subject of his work; and he was two full centuries distant from St. Columba.[2]

The passage from Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People' which refers to religion in Scotland has been often quoted, and cannot be too often quoted, because it contains, in a few lines, almost all that was known in the eighth century, or is known to-day, about the mysterious monks of Iona.

'That island has for its ruler an abbot, who is a priest, to whose jurisdiction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, are bound to be subject, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk; of whose life and discourses some records are said to be preserved by his disciples. But whatsoever he was himself, this we know concerning him, that he left successors renowned for their continence, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules.

'It is true they employed doubtful cycles in fixing the time of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far from the rest of the world; but they earnestly practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Apostolic

[1] Eoin MacNeill in *Phases of Irish History* (Dublin, 1919), p. 179.

[2] Bede had not seen a copy of Adamnan's Life. The Celts were something of a mystery even in the eighth century.

writings. This manner of keeping Easter continued among them no little time, to wit, for the space of 150 years, till the year of Our Lord 715.'[1]

The system of local Church discipline at Iona as described by Bede is uncommon in ecclesiastical history; the submission of the whole province, even the bishops, to the jurisdiction of a priest abbot, cannot easily be reconciled with any modern or ancient idea of Church government.[2] It is certainly not 'primitive.' Scottish historians have always said, and still say or suggest, that this difference in the local Church discipline between Iona and the rest of the Christian world is sufficiently important to warrant the conclusion that Iona went still further and rejected or ignored the Papal jurisdiction.

In the sixth century recognition of the Pope was the normal attitude of all Christians; an independent or hostile spirit would have been abnormal. Adamnan, who worked to restore uniformity on the question of Easter, was certainly orthodox on the subject of Papal authority. Does his silence on the point mean that he was shielding the memory of Columba from the reproach of unorthodoxy? The speculation is hazardous.

The silence of Bede may perhaps be regarded as more significant. The passage I have quoted reads, I think, as if he had mistrusted the Irish and had not been quite sure of the facts or even of the orthodoxy of Columba. On the other hand he had no motive for shielding a schismatic Irishman.

In the eighth century heresy or schism or anything that even threatened to destroy the spirit of Christian unity was regarded as the greatest crime against

[1] Bede, iii. 4 (trans. A. M. Sellar).

[2] 'The Maronites were governed from their monastery, in which a certain number of bishops resided.'—Duchesne, *Origines du Culte chrét.* (Eng. tr., p. 66).

civilisation which a man could commit. If the Irish Church had been suspected of this crime, Bede would have said so. The curious disciplinary system of the Irish is probably sufficient to account for the disapproval which can be read between the lines of his reference to Iona. A peculiar, and popular, school of history has, however, determined that the silences of Adamnan and Bede can best be accounted for by the hypothesis that Iona was completely independent of Roman jurisdiction.

The conclusion was strengthened by the fact that Columba had set out from Ireland to evangelise Scotland on his own initiative, and that there is no evidence of his ever having had any communication with ecclesiastical authorities either in Britain, Gaul, or Italy. But as the argument from silence upon which this thesis rested was admittedly shaky, attempts were made by historians to obtain more definite evidence of ancestral non-conformity.

The Scots were told that their national genius for schism extended back throughout all the ages and that the spirit of disruption had been just as active and virulent in the sixth as in the nineteenth century. The most favourite of all schismatic ancestors were those mysterious people the 'Culdees.'

Exactly what the Scottish Culdees were, nobody knows.[1] In Ireland the word 'céile Dé' had been originally used as a generic name for people who lived apart from the world, and was not specifically applied to an order of men living under a common rule as seems to have been the case in Scotland. In Scottish history Culdees are not mentioned till the

[1] See L. Gougaud, Article 'Culdees' in *Dict. d'Arch. Chrét. et de Liturgie*; Joseph Robertson, Preface to *Concilia Scotiae*, Edinburgh, 1866; W. Reeves, 'The Culdees of the British Islands' (*Trans. of the Royal Irish Academy*, 1860), Dublin, 1864.

tenth century, and their position in the religious life of the country is uncertain. There is not a scrap of evidence to show that they were hostile to the Roman See. The credulity of Scotsmen on the subject of the Culdees has been excessive. In the eighteenth century controversy was concerned with the etymology of the word; an Irish origin was of course looked upon with disfavour, and the most popular derivation was from the Latin *cultores Dei*. One writer carefully explained that this derivation proved there was a difference between Papists and Culdees, the latter being 'worshippers of God,' *i.e.* not 'worshippers of Saints.'

The historical ignorance of the Reformation period may be measured by the declaration of Buchanan that the Scottish Kirk had been founded by Christians fleeing from the Diocletian persecution; 'these men lived a solitary life, and when they died their cells were changed into temples or kirks: this sort of monk were called culdees.'

It is remarkable that Buchanan's account (copied from Hector Boece) should have been accepted anywhere in Scotland so late as the first quarter of the nineteenth century. A translation of his history published in 1827 by James Aikman contains hardly any warning against inaccuracies; the footnotes are confined to little more than anti-Roman vituperation.

Although it is quite certain that the monks of Iona were not Culdees, Dr. Jamieson of dictionary fame produced in 1810 an enormous volume entitled 'An Historical Account of the Ancient Culdees of Iona.' Among the names quoted as authorities are included Flacius Illyricus, Gibbon, and Mosheim. The last is praised as an 'impartial judge of the anti-Romanism of the inhabitants of Britain.'

That Scottish interest in history at this time was

still almost solely polemical is suggested rather naïvely by Jamieson in his preface :

> ' This is a subject which merits the regard of all who bear the name of Protestants . . . a gleam of light breaks forth to demonstrate the existence of men . . . who were champions for the simplicity of our faith and for the independence of the Church, at the very time that error and tyranny had extended their baleful empire over the continent of Europe.' [1]

Jamieson had many disciples, and his theory that the Culdees might be regarded as ancestors of the reformed Churches will be found in most of the Scottish history books written during the first half of the nineteenth century. The story of a pure and primitive Culdee Church was not confined to Britain ; it finds a place in Michelet's ' Histoire de France ' and was developed in Germany by Ebrard, ' Die iroschottische Missionskirche ' (1867).

This thesis of an independent sixth-century Scottish Church has been frequently supported by an appeal to the authority of Archbishop Ussher, one of the great scholars of the seventeenth century, who in 1631 published a ' Discourse of the Religion Professed by the Ancient Irish and British.' This was really a pamphlet written with a political object : to prove the identity of the ancient faith of Ireland with the new ideas which the English were at the time attempting to impose upon the Irish people. Successive generations of historians made use of this tract long after its unhistorical character had been exposed. Mosheim ' gratefully acknowledges his obligations to this work which has excellently filled up an inconvenient void in the ecclesiastical history of these islands.'

At the end of the eighteenth century Chalmers

[1] *An Historical Account of the Ancient Culdees of Iona,* Preface to Chapter I.

referred to the religion of St. Columba as to something about which no doubt could possibly be entertained, 'since Archbishop Ussher has proved, with an abundance of learning, that the religion of the Columbans was for substance the same which the Protestants now profess.'[1]

This writer's enormous and interminable 'Caledonia,' a book consisting of nearly 3000 pages, enjoyed considerable circulation and was accepted by many as a worthy specimen of Scottish scholarship. But Pinkerton[2] said that Chalmers was a shameless and illiterate plagiarist without a shadow of learning, 'who attempted to supply by quantity what was wanting in quality.'

It is possible that both appreciations may be correct. Fifty years later such respected historians as Cunningham and MacLauchlan were still quoting Ussher or using his pamphlet without acknowledgment, though sometimes with a modification of his thesis, to suit the requirements, as yet not very exacting, of a growing sense of historical criticism. MacLauchlan, in 1865, encouraged this sense among his readers with the cautious remark that: 'nothing like Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, synods or general assemblies, as now constituted, appears in the pages of Adamnan.'[3]

Ozanam has noted that the idea of a Celtic Protestantism can be traced to Ussher and was 'adopted by many French and German writers, notably by Augustin Thierry and Rettberg.'[4] Augustin Thierry knew nothing at all about the sources of Celtic history; his ignorance can be measured by the fact

[1] *Caledonia*, vol. i. p. 311.

[2] *Pinkerton's Enquiry*, p. xx, Introduction to edition of 1814 (Blackwood).

[3] *The Early Scottish Church*, p. 172.

[4] *La Civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs* (Paris, 1849), p. 100.

that he identified St. Columba of Iona with Columbanus of Bobbio.

This unhistorical character of Ussher's 'Discourse' was clearly established by the neglected Irish historian, Lanigan, in 1822. To the credit of German Protestantism it should be noted that Loofs proved conclusively in an essay written in 1882 (which has hardly ever been mentioned by a Scottish historian) that the thesis of Ussher is untenable.[1]

This short sketch contained an impartial summary of all the evidence available at that time as to the character of the early Scottish Church and of its relations with the Papacy; it has never been translated, and its existence was unknown to the popular historians. Loofs belongs to the highest class of German scholarship. If his work on the early Church has been ignored in Scotland, it is not difficult to suggest a reason why.

The fact that the monks of Iona were not Culdees and that the Culdees were neither heretics nor schismatics was made plain as long ago as 1685, by Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, again by Braun ('De Culdeis,' 1840), by Lanigan,[2] by Reeves, 1860, and by Döllinger. But the credit for impressing the truth upon Scotland belongs to W. F. Skene, who, first in 1867, 'The Highlanders of Scotland,' and later in his better-known work, 'Celtic Scotland,' 1876–80, finally disposed of the popular myth.

As soon as the witness of the Culdees to religious independence had, for want of data, to be disallowed, the Scottish patriots began to look around for some other ancestors. They claimed to have discovered what they wanted in Ireland. No one could now

[1] Fried. Loofs, *De Antiqua Britonum Scotorumque Ecclesia*, Leipzig, 1882. Loofs was mentioned but not utilised by Dr. MacEwen, *History of the Church in Scotland*, 1914.

[2] *Ecclesiastical Hist. of Ireland*, 1822.

deny that the faith and discipline of St. Columba came direct from Ireland. Whatever the Irish monks thought of the Papacy in the sixth century was also the thought of Columba of Iona. Between the old Irish and the newly founded Scottish Church there was no division but the sea.

The chief witness called for the antipapal sentiments of the Irish Church is St. Columbanus of Bobbio. Here there is a certain amount of evidence available, and it is important to make quite clear how this evidence has been handled and how inadequately it has been presented to the Scottish reader, not merely by a few narrow-minded ecclesiastics but by the whole body of modern historical writers. A large number of quotations are necessary in order to avoid the unpleasant accusation of having merely made up a catalogue of the errors that must always occur in history books as long as mortals err.

The errors I am about to catalogue are not of this class. In the first place they are errors with a pedigree, they are not ' made ' but copied, repeatedly copied, by both Professors of History and Doctors of Divinity, by the professional and by the amateur.

There is no dispute about the main facts of the history of St. Columbanus; the documents upon which those facts rest are, with trifling exceptions, above suspicion. Columbanus was born in the Province of Leinster about 543. He was therefore a contemporary of St. Kentigern and of Columba. He left Ireland when over forty years of age with a number of companions; settled in Gaul; founded there several monasteries, and after various adventures went to northern Italy, where he built the monastery of Bobbio and died in 615. His life was written by Jonas, a monk of Bobbio, with the usual object of such biographers, to put on record those

things which might be edifying to the monks for whose special benefit the book was written. There are fortunately other sources of information. The literary remains of St. Columbanus are more numerous and contain more contemporary history than those of any other Celtic personage. The fragments of his writings that have survived include a few sermons and some Latin verse, and, most interesting of all, some letters addressed to Pope Gregory the Great, to his successor Pope Sabinian, and to Pope Boniface IV.

Here is a chance to discover, by analogy, what the Scots at Iona thought about the Pope. Columbanus of Bobbio provides what has been lost, if it ever existed, from the record of Columba of Iona, an insight into Celtic Christianity when in contact and in actual correspondence with Papal headquarters. But as a matter of fact historians generally have taken very little notice of St. Columbanus. Although his letters are among the most important documents of sixth-century history and are written in very difficult Latin, no attempt has ever been made to provide students with a translation. (No notice need be taken of the barbaric struggle made by Robert King to render the letter to Boniface IV. into intelligible English.[1])

Consequently the general reader who relies on the popular history books and encyclopedias will find

[1] *Primer of the History of the Holy Catholic Church in Ireland*, Dublin, 1858. This curious book seems to have had at one time a considerable circle of readers; it is often mentioned in the footnotes of English and Scottish histories. The author declares that it was written 'chiefly for very young and ignorant persons' and because he thought it 'most necessary and important that the historical misrepresentations with which the Church of Rome has done so much to mislead the unlearned amongst us, should be met by true plain statements, setting forth what was really the state of things connected with the ancient religion and ancient Church of our country.' But with the Latin of St. Columbanus this zealous churchman had a knotty time.

only a superficial account of this important personality, and nothing at all about his letters except certain mutilated fragments of quotation which have been handed down for generations by one compiler to another with seldom any reference to the context or to the original documents.

These mutilated fragments are used, of course, to show how vigorously this 'great Irish Churchman' (the phrase is *de rigueur*) always set himself against the Papacy. I have not been able to find who was actually the first writer to twist these texts to fit a predetermined thesis. Torn in fragments from their setting, these mutilated particles have found a permanent domicile in the school textbooks, in the works of reference, in the popular history books,—they have been copied for generations, without reference to the original documents, by the professionals, by the amateurs, by the polemists, by the newspapers, and by scholars who ought to have known better.

The pedigree of misquoted texts is seldom complete, as it is nearly always impossible to trace the man who first made a hasty, or perhaps deliberate, choice from the original document. As an account of the career of these dismembered texts must begin somewhere, I have started with a professional historian who was long accepted in Britain as a reliable authority upon Celtic religious history. I begin with Dr. G. T. Stokes, Professor of Church History at Trinity College, Dublin, whose lectures were published with the title 'Ireland and the Celtic Church' (1887).

Stokes spoke of Columbanus emphatically; he spoke with conviction; he did not leave those who relied upon his word any room for doubt. But he was significantly brief. Not only as a lecturer in the

class room, but as an instructor of the outside world, Stokes was quite firm about the position of St. Columbanus. In an article published in the *Expositor*, 3rd Series, vol. x., he writes of that saint as a witness for Celtic independence 'which no casuistry [*sic*] can explain away.' Stokes the writer merely asserts, he does not stop to offer proof to readers who were already firmly convinced. But Stokes the teacher is likewise in a hurry.

'Did time permit,' he said to his students at Trinity College, Dublin, 'we might devote, and with much profit, a whole lecture to consider the ecclesiastical position of St. Columbanus . . . In the Life of Columbanus there is many a mention of the pope and several letters to popes, but there is also an express rejection and denial of their claims' (p. 147).

'Time' never permitted that lecture on the ecclesiastical position of St. Columbanus to be delivered. Stokes never found time to publish any proof of his dogmatic statements or even to read the letters of St. Columbanus in the text available in Trinity College library. In all his published works he quotes only one sentence from these letters, and that is a hackneyed paragraph, the common property of compilers, part of the ready-made stock useful to historians in a hurry.

There was no 'time' to tell the students all about the firm and determined independence of the 'great Celtic missionary'—again the phrase is *de rigueur*.

'Let me, however,' continued the Professor, 'give a brief extract from St. Columbanus' epistle on the Easter question written to one of the greatest of Popes, Gregory the Great, in defence of his own Irish rites and ceremonies and in opposition to the Roman mode. The unbiassed student can then draw his own conclusions' (p. 148).

But if the 'unbiassed student' had happened to be familiar with the original text he would have

already come to the conclusion that his Professor was romancing. The letter in question was certainly not written in defence of Irish rites and ceremonies or in opposition to any Roman mode of anything. This letter was written, as Columbanus himself explicitly declares, for the purpose of asking the Pope's ruling—not his opinion, but his ruling, his judgment—upon three points of ecclesiastical discipline, the chief of which concerned the date of celebration of Easter.

Columbanus writes to the Pope in defence of the Celtic date for the observance of Easter and against the date followed by the Gauls. There is no question of opposition to Roman dates. The Irish followed a date which had been fixed for them and the rest of Christendom by Rome in the fifth century. When a new computation was introduced it gradually asserted itself throughout Christendom, Ireland excepted. As Bede remarks, the Irish were so far away that no one had brought them the synodal decrees. This explanation is confirmed by the fact that Columbanus when he wrote his letter to Pope Gregory did not know that the date of the Gauls to which he objected so vigorously and so unreasonably was also the date used in Rome itself. Zimmer has noticed this point in his 'Pelagius in Irland.' Indeed anybody who reads the letter itself cannot help seeing this at once. Even the 'unbiassed student' could have deduced this fact from the small piece of the letter which Stokes allowed him to see.

This fragment, the only extract from the writings of St. Columbanus which occurs in the works of Dr. Stokes, had already been repeatedly used by distinguished writers as an illustration of Celtic opposition to the Roman See.

'How is it that you with all your wisdom . . . are induced to support this dark paschal system? I wonder, I confess,

that the erroneous practice of Gaul has not been long since abolished by you. You are afraid, perhaps, of incurring the charge of a taste for novelty and are content with the authority of your predecessors, and of Pope Leo in particular. But do not, I beseech you, in a matter of such importance give way to the dictates of humility or gravity only, as they are often mistaken. It may be that in this affair a living dog is better than a dead lion (or Leo). For a living saint may correct the errors that have not been corrected by another greater one' (p. 148).

Stokes then explains to his 'unbiassed students' how this text can be read as an 'express rejection and denial of the Papal claims.'

'It was not very complimentary to Pope Gregory to call him a living dog,' and, 'I do not think that the reverence of Columbanus for the Pope, or his belief in papal infallibility, can have been very great, when he could use such language.'

This is the whole case upon which the Dublin Professor based his citation of Columbanus as a witness to Celtic independence of the Papacy 'which no casuistry [*sic*] can explain away.' In all his written works there is nothing brought forward in support of this positive assertion except the above quotation, taken most probably at second hand (he had not read the original letter, since he was unable to give his 'unbiassed students' an accurate summary of its contents), and a comment which is not only superficial but childish.

Yet Stokes obtained a favourable judgment for his case, both in England and in Scotland, where 'Ireland and the Celtic Church' acquired the status of an historical textbook. The lectures of Professor Stokes, we are told, 'are specially adapted to young students, and the general treatment is of an uncontroversial character.'[1]

[1] *Introduction to the Study of English History* (London, 1903, 4th ed.), S. R. Gardiner and J. B. Mullinger.

Practically all the compilers have adopted Stokes' 'view' of St. Columbanus as an ancestor of non-conformity: a view only to be obtained by looking, as they did, at Stokes and not at Columbanus. In only one modern book on early Scottish history, or on contingent subjects, have I found any mention of a paper written by F. W. Kellett in 1889, two years after the publication of 'Ireland and the Celtic Church.'

Under the title 'Gregory the Great and His Relations with Gaul,' in the series of *Cambridge Historical Essays*, Cambridge, 1889, Kellett included a critical analysis of the letter from St. Columbanus to Pope Gregory, which, more fortunate than Stokes, he had found 'time' to study for himself.

But here there is no picture of an insolent foreigner dictating to and insulting his superiors. Such a 'view' of the Irish Saint can only be obtained by isolating a single paragraph of his letter to the Pope and ignoring the context, which shows, as Kellett pointed out, that Columbanus was a simple monk, impetuous and full of enthusiasm, but with nothing of the brazen impudence attributed to him by Stokes as a compliment.

However, the teaching of Stokes has prevailed, and St. Columbanus is still applauded as the man who called the Pope a 'living dog.' Here was an ancestor to whom the patriots could look back with pride; here a true continuity of the national spirit; here spoke, with no uncertain voice, not only a 'Scoto-Irishman,' but the 'Ecclesia Scotticana.' [1]

[1] In a preface to the third edition of *Ireland and the Celtic Church* Stokes stuck to his guns with grim determination. 'This edition,' he wrote, 'is an exact reprint of those previously published, as I have seen no sufficient cause to change any of the views therein expressed.'

CHAPTER VI

THE LIVING DOG (*continued*)

Patchwork and plagiarism—Development of the Columbanus myth; Columbanus and Jerome—Iona and Ireland.

FEW people realise how the history books for popular use have usually been constructed. Compilers often borrow whole paragraphs without acknowledgment, merely arranging the words so appropriated in a slightly different order. New books are being constantly remade out of old ones with a patchwork of plagiarism sometimes worked so skilfully that the transpositions employed would scarcely ever be noticed except by the literary Sherlock Holmes who is on the look-out for such things.

The search for patchwork and the unpicking thereof add a new interest to the reading of history. It should be the business of the literary detective not merely to expose the heavy-handed plagiarist who scarcely takes any pains to cover his tracks, but to analyse history books with the object of discovering how they have been put together.

Easiest to detect among the many vices of book construction is the common habit of copying quotations at second hand and permitting the reader to suppose that they have been taken fresh from the source. Quotations thus copied are very often copies of other copies, and the wording is often inaccurate and detection easy. A proof that a writer has not consulted the document with which he pretends to be familiar may sometimes be obtained by reading

the context of what has been quoted. This context will often show that a quotation has a meaning quite different from or even quite opposite to what it has been made to carry.

As a result of attempting to exercise this art of detection upon a good many of the books about early Scottish Christianity written in the nineteenth century and after, I have come to the conclusion that very few of those writers who speak of St. Columbanus as an enemy of the Papacy have ever read, or even looked at, the text of his correspondence with the Popes.

The 'living dog' appears in practically all the handbooks and has usually been transferred from one book to another without any reference to the text or the context.

A fine example of the transpositional method, borrowing at second hand but pretending to quote from the source, occurs in a 'History of the Scottish Church' by Mr. Stephen.[1] This writer took a whole paragraph,[2] including the living dog, from Robertson's 'History of the Christian Church,'[3] reproducing the sentences in a different order. Robertson himself was one of the many compilers who had no time to consult the documents; he copied from Neander, who likewise shows no sign of acquaintance with what Columbanus had really written.

Many historians have emphasised the supposed insolence of Columbanus by quoting the words 'living dog' and sometimes omitting the context where he speaks of the Pope as a 'living saint.' Some of the most popular and distinguished authorities on Church history have unwittingly deceived their readers in this manner. Both Dudden ('Life

[1] Edinburgh, 2 vols., 1894–6.
[2] Vol. i. p. 119. [3] London, 1856, 2 vols. (vol. ii. p. 27).

of Gregory the Great') and Haddan ask, just as Stokes did, what sort of notion that writer could have had of papal infallibility, who tells a Pope that a living dog is better than a dead lion. All this is most unfair.

To quote this pun about the 'living dog,' with or without reference to the context, as an adequate representation of the sentiments of St. Columbanus towards the Roman See, is bad history.

The use made by these writers of the word 'infallibility' is misleading; the modern technical term, it is well known, had not currency in Columbanus' time. Yet it must be obvious to anyone who will look history in the face that the Church of the sixth century regarded the Pope as the supreme and final court of appeal on all matters relating to Faith.

The correspondence of Columbanus bears ample witness to this fact. He wrote to Pope Sabinian and asked approval for his Celtic custom of observing Easter, 'si non contra fidem est.' What else is this but to ask the Pope to decide what is and what is not against the Faith? The position of infallible authority claimed by the Popes of the sixth century is established by the documents of that period which can be consulted in the published collections. Anyone who has any doubts that this claim was persistently made by the Popes, and accepted as a matter of course by the whole Christian Church of that century, should look at the index of names, especially under the heading 'Sti. Petri, confessio,' in the third volume of the series of the *Epistolae* in 'Monumenta Germaniae Historica.'

The Papal doctrine is distinctly laid down by Pope Pelagius II in a letter sent to certain schismatical bishops and written about the year 585. Peter is

the key-bearer; the pastor of the flock; the rock upon which the Church is built. 'Consider, dearest brethren, that truth cannot lie nor can the Faith of Peter be shaken or changed to all eternity.' [1]

If Columbanus did not accept this teaching he would have been regarded as a schismatic and could never have written as he did to Pope Boniface IV:

'Do not despise this little piece of advice given by a foreigner, for you have taught him and it is your cause that he is championing.' [2]

Nearly every historian who has mentioned the 'living dog' has obviously borrowed the reference at second hand. When pursuing this animal with the vain hope of discovering the writer who first introduced it to the public, I came across a pamphlet written by C. W. Bispham, of New York, which, although it deals solely with the history of St. Columbanus, contains no reference at all to the text of his letters and gives no indication of where that text may be found.

Here again is the 'living dog,' quoted from

[1] 'Considerate, carissimi, quia veritas mentiri non potuit nec fides Petri in aeternum quassari poterit vel mutari. Nam cum omnes discipulos diabolus ad cribrandum poposcerit, pro solo Petro se Dominus rogasse testatur et ab eo ceteros voluit confirmari; cui etiam pro maiori dilectione, quam prae ceteris Domino exhibebat, pascendarum ovium sollicitudo commissa est; cui et claves regni caelorum tradidit et super quem suam ecclesiam aedificaturum esse promisit nec portas inferi adversus eam praevalere testatus est. Sed quia inimicus humani generis usque in finem saeculi non quiescit in Domini ecclesiam bono semini superseminare zizaniam, ideoque, ne forte quisquam maligno studio aliqua de fidei nostrae integritate diaboli instigatione fingere praesumpserit augmentari et ex hoc vestri fortasse videantur animi perturbari, necessarium iudicavimus per praesentem epistolam nostram et, ad viscera vos matris ecclesiae ut reverti debeatis, cum lacrimis exhortari et de nostra fidei integritate vobis satisfactionem nostram mittere, quatenus nulla possit in vestris cordibus de nobis remanere suspicio, ut in divini tremendique iudicii die de taciturnitate mea reus inveniri non possim.'—*M.G.H.*, *Epistolae*, Tom. II, Appendix III, p. 443.

[2] Appendix I, p. 214.

Robertson, and here also is the comment with which its appearance is usually accompanied: 'It goes without saying that Columban refused to submit to the Roman authority.'

So say all the textbooks; and how can the mass of the people hold any other opinion?

I am indebted to this American student of history for an unexpected introduction to Puller's 'Primitive Saints and the See of Rome' (1893). Although Puller does not mention the living dog, his reticence in dealing with quotations from the letters of Columbanus is worthy of notice.

'One might go on,' he writes, 'to quote the celebrated letter of the glorious missionary St. Columbanus to Pope Boniface IV, in which he justifies the refusal of many Bishops of North Italy to communicate with the Papal Chair.'[1]

But Puller does not go on, at least not very far. He quotes a few words from the middle of a long sentence, so that Columbanus is found saying to the Pope:

'Rightly do your juniors resist you and rightly do they not communicate with you.'

'One might go on' to quote the context:

'Si vos deviastis de vera fiducia et "primam fidem irritam fecistis"; merito vestri iuniores vobis resistunt et merito vobiscum non communicant.'

The context where this passage occurs shows that the 'glorious missionary St. Columbanus' was particularly anxious that the Papal Chair should be cleared of the imputation of heresy put upon it by the schismatic bishops of Northern Italy. Not only 'Primitive Saints' but a good many modern ones could be brought forward as witnesses against

[1] p. 405.

the Papal claims, if Puller's method of quoting documents be allowed.

St. Bernard, whose orthodoxy has not yet been made the subject of controversy, might very well be placed alongside St. Columbanus as an enemy of the Roman See.

'One might go on' to quote the celebrated letter of St. Bernard to Eugenius III :

'The place wherein you stand is holy ground; it is the place of Peter . . . who is buried there that he may be a witness against you.'

Here St. Bernard clearly implies that Pope Eugenius III cannot be regarded as the successor of St. Peter. But when the context is supplied the implication vanishes. I have omitted from the text of St. Bernard's letter almost exactly the same words as Puller omitted from the letter of St. Columbanus.

St. Bernard wrote to Pope Eugenius :

'St. Peter is buried there that he may be a witness against you *if* you have departed from the way of the Lord.' [1]

St. Columbanus wrote to Boniface IV :

'Rightly do your juniors resist you and rightly do they not communicate with you *if* you have strayed from loyalty.' [2]

The language used by St. Columbanus in his letter to Boniface IV is often of a kind which would certainly meet with disapproval if used by prelates writing to a Pope at the present day, but vigorous criticism of Popes was not unusual in early and even in late

[1] 'Locus, inquam, in quo stas, terra sancta est; locus Petri est, locus Principis Apostolorum, ubi steterunt pedes eius. Locus illius est quem constituit Dominus dominum domus suae, et principem omnis possessionis suae. Si forte declinaveris a via Domini, sepultus est in eodem loco, ut sit tibi contra te in testimonium.' (Migne, *Cursus completus Patrologiae Latinae*, vol. 182, col. 429.)

[2] Appendix I, p. 221.

medieval times, and if such criticism became rare and is strange to modern ears, it should be remembered that the Reformation of the sixteenth century supplies an explanation.

Before the sixteenth century, criticism of the Papacy was nearly always an attack not on the institution but on the individual. Yet the post-Reformation historians insisted upon reading into the frankness of early medieval criticism a foretaste of Luther's attack upon the Papal system. That there was a real difference between the spirit of criticism before and after the Reformation has seldom been sufficiently emphasised, and for this reason the history of medieval controversies has often been misunderstood and misrepresented.

The point has been well put by Füter:

'With the mediaeval criticism of Popes Protestantism has forged weapons against the institution itself and it was no longer possible to criticise openly any ecclesiastical organisation. All the sallies in medieval literature against Popes and Prelates and monks were taken by the Protestants quite contrary to the reality of history, as symptoms of dogmatic Lutheran opposition to the Papacy, and no distinction was made as to whether the expression quoted had come from the buffoonery of versifiers, the prose of free thinkers, or the friends of reform within the Church. Consequently that naïve humour which had been a mark of the old Church completely disappeared'[1] (p. 306).

The emphasis laid upon the unimportant pun on the words living dog and dead *leo* by Robertson, Stokes, and others too numerous to quote, illustrates

[1] Boccaccio, in spite of the *Decameron*, 'was no unbeliever or enemy of the Church,' Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes* (London, 1913, Eng. tr.), vol. i. p. 5. That Sebastian Brandt has been erroneously hailed as an opponent of the Papacy is shown by A. Pompen in *The English Versions of the Ship of Fools*, London, 1925. So also Dante and Petrarch. Unhistorical likewise is Wordsworth's description of Chaucer as a

'great Precursor, genuine morning star . . .
piercing the Papal darkness from afar.'
('Ecclesiastical Sonnets,' Part II., No. xxxi.)

only one of the many ways in which St. Columbanus has been called as a witness to the religious independence of the Irish in the sixth century.

Practically all historians past and present who have written about St. Columbanus, and who were themselves active or passive opponents of the Papacy, have put their own sentiments into the mind of the Irish saint.

This imposition has usually been effected after the manner of Stokes, by emphatic assertion accompanied with only a mere pretence of proof and without any real knowledge of the documents. It might be argued that historians writing books of instruction for the general public are not expected to advance detailed proofs of everything they assert, and that consequently such writers as Robertson, Stokes, etc., were justified in quoting the 'living dog' as an illustration of St. Columbanus' epistolary manner.

Although it might be true that some historians were not acquainted with the text of St. Columbanus and had taken their quotations on trust from a second-hand source, can it not be maintained that after all their confidence in the second-hand authorities was justifiable? This objection gains apparent weight from the fact that many eminent British scholars of the nineteenth century, whose knowledge of the texts cannot be denied, have accepted Columbanus as a witness to Celtic independence. The apparent validity of such an objection rests on the assumption that the eminent British scholars who have read the text for themselves can be trusted with the interpretation.

This question of the attitude taken up by the early Church in these islands towards the See of Rome has presented no difficulties to the historians

of the nineteenth century. They saw not a problem to be solved but a principle to be consolidated. The few scholars who went to the sources did so in order to find a reinforcement for the foundation upon which their convictions had settled. Such expeditions are nearly always successful. There is no text so clear that it cannot be misread. And in the letters of St. Columbanus there is, as I have shown, ample scope for the uncritical explorer. Among the British scholars who have specialised in this branch of Celtic history the name of Haddan is pre-eminent. He is chiefly remembered for his collaboration with Bishop Stubbs in editing the well-known 'Collection of Councils and Documents' relating to the early history of Britain.

'His published works . . .,' wrote Bishop Forbes, 'indicate scholarship of no ordinary kind, an acute critical instinct, and an accuracy which amounted to precision . . . no passion, no predisposition, no foregone conclusion influenced the man.' [1]

It will not be difficult to show that as far as the history of early Christianity in Scotland is concerned this appreciation of Haddan's critical ability and independence of previous writers cannot be sustained.

That he is still regarded as an authority of the first rank by men of education and position is evident from the following declaration of the Archbishop of Wales, reported in *The Times*, September 15, 1923:

'Haddan and Stubbs, and Canon Warren in his invaluable work on the Celtic Church, give the history of this period, and small wonder that "the old Mother," as the Church is called, has still the first place in the hearts of Welshmen.'

Small wonder indeed. Because for generations these Welshmen in their study of history have

[1] Introduction to *Haddan's Remains*, Oxford, 1876.

followed the lead of national sentiment, they are unable or unwilling to face the facts.

Haddan, at Oxford a contemporary and also a friend of Newman's, was recognised as the leading authority on Church history; on him the textbooks and encyclopedias have for successive generations relied. His chief contribution to the literature of Scottish history is an essay entitled 'Scots on the Continent,' republished by Bishop Forbes in 'Haddan's Remains.'

There is a remarkable difference of opinion among the contemporary reviewers of Haddan's works, as to what he really thought of the attitude taken up by the early Church in these islands to the See of Rome. M. Gustave Masson, in the 'Revue des Questions Historiques,' wrote that:

> 'Haddan demolished the romantic story of a British Church formed independently of the Holy See and determined not to recognise the supremacy of Rome.'

Simultaneously, a critic in the 'North British Review' observed that:

> 'Haddan probably goes as far as learning and judgment will permit anyone to go in supporting the time-honoured views of Parker and Ussher as to an early and independent British Church.'[1]

This contradiction among the critics can be partly accounted for by the fact that Haddan, although he demonstrated the futility of the arguments in common use, kept the time-honoured thesis and replaced the old fallacies, which had satisfied the disciples of Parker and Ussher, with a new set of explanations and reasons. That he went much further than learning and judgment will permit anyone to go, can be made clear by examining his treatment of the correspondence between St. Columbanus and the Popes.

[1] *North British Review*, vol. li. (Jan. 1870), p. 220.

In the essay, 'Scots on the Continent,' this historian maintained that the Irish in the sixth century refused to recognise Papal authority; his handling of Columbanus as a witness is not in accordance with the rules which ought to govern the examination of evidence. If St. Columbanus is going to be called as a witness to the position taken up by the Celts on the subject of Papal supremacy, it will not do to draw a conclusion from one part of his evidence which is in direct contradiction with what he has written elsewhere.

The name of Haddan has been repeatedly quoted as an authority on this particular question of St. Columbanus and Rome which no one could have the hardihood to challenge. Yet his uncritical treatment of the texts could never have escaped the notice of an impartial observer.

'Columbanus, however, is,' he wrote, 'the case most in point. His very admissions enhance the force of the refusal to submit, which is made in the face of them.' [1]

Haddan then produced the refusal to submit from the letter to Pope Gregory.

[Columbanus] 'proceeds to tell this representative of St. Peter, that he had better make out the Papal doctrine to agree with that of St. Jerome if he can; for "simpliciter ego tibi confiteor, quod contra sancti Hieronymi auctoritatem veniens, apud occidentes ecclesias haereticus seu respuendus erit; illi enim per omnia indubitatam in Scripturis Divinis accommodant fidem."' [2]

It is certainly quite true that Columbanus in his letter to Pope Gregory hints very broadly that his verdict on the question of when Easter should be celebrated was only asked for as a matter of form, and that if unfavourable the Irish would not submit.

[1] *Remains*, p. 291. [2] *Ibid.*

But Haddan is not entitled to settle the problem under discussion on the evidence of this letter without any reference to the subsequent letter to Pope Sabinian wherein St. Columbanus modifies his truculent attitude and asks for a favourable verdict 'si non contra fidem est.'

The contradiction, the difference of tone, between these two letters calls for some sort of examination.

The passage from the letter to Pope Gregory upon which Haddan laid such undue stress must be accepted as nothing more than an instance of the muddle-headed impetuosity of the writer. The question about the date for keeping Easter, to which the Irish attached undue importance, has nothing to do with Faith or with the Divine Scriptures, as Columbanus suggests.

After sending off his letter to Pope Gregory, Columbanus must have realised his mistake in pressing so clumsily this point about Easter. His change of tone, and his use of the words 'si non contra fidem est' in the subsequent letter to Pope Sabinian might be accounted for by supposing that during one of the many discussions which must have gone on while the Celtic monks were waiting for the reply from Rome (which, as far as is known, never came) someone in the monastery may have read out a very apt quotation from the 71st letter of St. Jerome :

'The traditions of the Church, those of course not harmful to the Faith, must be maintained as they have been handed down by our ancestors.'[1]

St. Jerome was much read by the Irish, and it is more than probable that the library at Luxeuil contained a copy of his works; it may have been from the treatise of Jerome against Vigilantius that

[1] 'Traditiones ecclesiasticas—praesertim quae fidei non officiunt—ita obseruandas, ut a maioribus traditae sunt' (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 1912, vol. lv. p. 6).

Columbanus took his unfortunate idea of using the scriptural[1] proverb about the living dog and the dead lion. Jerome, like so many ecclesiastics of all ages, was a persistent punster:

'Vigilantius,' he wrote, 'should rather be called "Dormitantius,"' adding: 'Shall Vigilantius the living dog be better than Paul the dead lion?'[2]

A comparative study of the letters of Columbanus and those of Jerome might lead to some useful results. There are similarities of matter and form between the letter of Columbanus to Pope Boniface IV and one written by Jerome to Pope Damasus (377) which may be more than coincidence. Both letters are appeals for an apostolic decision; in both the metaphors of pilot, ship, and storm are repeatedly used; and there is even in places a similarity of phraseology. Columbanus writes 'devincti sumus,' 'we are bound' to the chair of Peter; Jerome had written, 'he who clings to the chair of Peter is accepted by me.'[3]

Whatever may be thought of these suggestions, there can be no manner of doubt that Haddan completely missed the true significance of the sympathy which bound the Irish to the memory of St. Jerome, and he is not alone in having made this mistake. The suggestion, temerariously based on the words of Columbanus, that the Celts were followers of St. Jerome and not of the Papacy, has been used almost as often as the much exercised 'living dog' to prove the anti-Papal sentiment of Ireland and Scotland in the sixth century.

[1] Ecclesiastes ix. 4.

[2] The Irish in general, and St. Columbanus in particular, as may be seen from the text of his letters, rejoiced in far-fetched allusions. Canis, 'the watch-dog,' Vigilantius, 'watchful,' Gregorius, 'watchful' (in Greek), were not these verbal coincidences present in the mind of Columbanus when he penned his elaborate joke?

[3] 'Si quis cathedrae Petri iungitur, meus est.' Letter XVI to Pope Damasus, *op. cit.* vol. liv. p. 69.

As a matter of fact the quotation in question affords an indication of Irish orthodoxy.

Columbanus is writing to the Pope upon the troublesome date of Easter; he is trying to persuade the Pope that the Gauls are all wrong and that the Celtic date has the authority of Jerome (which of course it had not). He therefore says to the Pope: 'He who goes against the authority of Jerome will be rejected or regarded as heretical by the Western Churches.' From this statement it follows that the Western Churches, that Ireland and Scotland in the sixth century agreed in doctrine and discipline with the faith of Jerome. Among the scholars of the nineteenth century, Loofs was almost the only one to appreciate the importance of this fact. Haddan missed it altogether.

It is a proof that the Celts recognised the importance of unity, and that they knew only one Church under the successor of St. Peter. For the teaching of Jerome is quite definite on this point, and is distinctly expressed in a letter to Pope Damasus:

> 'As I follow no leader save Christ, I associate myself in communion with your Holiness, that is with the chair of Peter. For on that rock I know the Church is built. Whosoever shall eat the paschal lamb outside that house is profane, etc., etc.'

When historians, even those of such distinction as Haddan, write with the already established conviction that Christianity in the sixth century was divided as now into a number of national Churches, they cannot read the documents rightly, because they are always looking for some phrase, for some combination of words, which can be twisted to suit their pre-convictions.

There are plenty of such phrases in the correspondence of Columbanus. The letter to Pope

Boniface IV in particular is full of paradoxical statements. The writer has clearly a difficulty in expressing his exact meaning: when he merely wishes to be emphatic, he exaggerates. The text is in many places almost untranslatable owing partly to its corruption, and partly also to the confusion of the Celtic mind trying to express exact ideas in Latin.

The mind of Columbanus cannot be known from single isolated extracts which have been repeatedly used alike by celebrated and by insignificant writers to convey the impression that Columbanus was an enemy of the Papacy.

The following sentences are among those most commonly quoted with this intention, and they provide a much better argument, when the context is omitted, than the pun about the 'living dog.'

1. It is a matter of grief if the Catholic Faith be not held in the Apostolic See.
2. The name of God is blasphemed among the peoples on account of . . . you.
3. They who have kept the orthodox Faith will be your judges whosoever they may be.
4. You claim beyond others a certain exaggerated authority in Divine things.

The historians who quote these lonely sentences always omit to state that Columbanus is putting the case against the Papacy as it had been given to him by Agrippinus and the schismatic bishops of Northern Italy. Nor do they say that Columbanus states most definitely that he does not believe the accusation of heresy made against the See of Rome.

To try to get at the meaning of Columbanus by reading his letters as a whole is not what Stokes called 'casuistry,' but is an essential process of historical criticism.

One thing is clear from a general survey: when

Columbanus censures the Pope he does so in a conditional mood. He says in effect—*if* you have done this, it is right to oppose you. But when he expresses his recognition of Papal authority he is positive and definite.

1. I speak as a friend, a disciple, a humble follower of yours.
2. I have pledged myself on your behalf that the Roman Church will never defend a heretic against the Catholic Faith.
3. I urge you, my fathers and true superiors, to drive away confusion from the faces of your sons and disciples that the mist of suspicion may be removed from the chair of Peter.
4. O King of Kings, do thou follow Peter; and let the whole Church follow thee.

These extracts would have provided students of early Irish Church history with a more accurate idea of the ecclesiastical position of St. Columbanus than they could hope to gain from the pun about Leo and the living dog, or from the shallow criticism passed upon the reference to the attachment of the Western Churches to the teaching of St. Jerome.

Among the few historians who have read the letters of St. Columbanus is Professor Bury, whose 'History of St. Patrick,' the most critical essay on the subject which has yet been published, contains a brief but thorough analysis of a portion of the correspondence of St. Columbanus. Bury has restored the correct meaning to one important passage of which previous historians had made the most incredible muddle.

This text, which has enjoyed a popularity as great as or even greater than the pun about the living dog or the reference to St. Jerome and the Western Churches, occurs in the letter to Pope Boniface IV, where Columbanus writes that:

'Rome is the head of the churches of the whole world with the exception of the special prerogative of the place of the Lord's resurrection.'

'An oft-quoted sentence,' writes R. L. Ramsay,[1] 'because it seems to rank Jerusalem above Rome in point of sanctity and ecclesiastical headship.'

The words were accepted as a proof that in the sixth century two Churches existed: one at Rome with the Pope as head, the other at Jerusalem under the Patriarch of that city.

Dr. Killen, Professor of History at Belfast (1875), in a book which still has an undeserved place of honour in the reference library of the British Museum, observed with simplicity:

'How deeply must Boniface have been mortified when he discovered that, in the estimation of Columbanus, the Bishop of Jerusalem was even a more exalted personage than the Bishop of Rome' (p. 47).

An army of Professors and others of less exalted station adopted this interpretation. Mr. Stephen copied it, along with the living dog, from Robertson.

But the most astounding explanation was that of Olden,[2] 'Church in Ireland' (1872), p. 97, who denied the word 'caput' its natural meaning.

'The term "head" is still used in Ireland among the peasantry to express dignity but not jurisdiction; *i.e.* as the head doctor of any town means the most eminent physician.'

These comments are, of course, childish, but they are a fair representation of the class of history read

[1] *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, viii. 1912, p. 450.

[2] The Rev. Thomas Olden was not, as might be imagined, an obscure country parson without reputation or influence upon the world of his day. He was regarded by his contemporaries as a moderate and reliable scholar and was selected by Leslie Stephen as a suitable person for writing in the *Dictionary of National Biography* the lives of Irish saints.

by the British public during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Haddan proposed an interpretation of the 'Jerusalem' text which is equally uncritical and has been widely accepted as correct.

He understood that Columbanus

'places his relationship to Rome in the same category with his relation to Jerusalem, and reckons both to be simply entitled to reverence, not to canonical obedience; and even so, Jerusalem first and Rome second.'[1]

There is little doubt that Haddan, and the numerous disciples who follow him, *e.g.* Bishop Forbes in his preface to 'Historians of Scotland,' were wrong in attempting on the strength of this passage to identify the attitude of St. Columbanus with modern Anglicanism and to represent his attitude to Rome as merely one of respect and reverence.

The true and obvious explanation is, as Professor Bury pointed out, that the reservation in favour of Jerusalem as the place of the Lord's Resurrection emphasises the value of the testimony of St. Columbanus to the supremacy of Rome as it shows

'that the writer is expressing his conviction and not merely using rhetorical phrases of politeness.'[2]

The meaning of St. Columbanus is perfectly plain, as Loofs showed over forty years ago.

Yet in England and Scotland historians of the first rank continued to cling to traditional misrepresentation. The result of this ancient and futile discussion over the meaning of a perfectly straightforward sentence was that compilers of lesser standing were able to pretend or were able to convince themselves that they were faced with an 'historical problem.' They informed their readers that on the

[1] *Remains*, p. 220. [2] *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 370.

ecclesiastical position of Columbanus 'authorities differ' and that the whole question must be left to the 'controversial historians.'

And so the impression is strengthened in the popular mind that truth in history is unattainable; and each one continues to believe what he pleases.

To many people it will be surprising to find that so distinguished an historian as Haddan should have been led so seriously astray by his desire to see the Papacy kept not only out of England but out of history.

For my own satisfaction, and not because I expect to persuade anyone to change his mind who has already determined what the religion of his ancestors really was, I must return again to the quotation of which Haddan made so much, the one which he says puts 'Jerusalem first and Rome second.'

In the sixth century a strong sentimental attachment to the Holy Land prevailed throughout all Christian Europe. When Columbanus was writing his letter to Pope Boniface IV, the historical events described in the New Testament were no further away than the battle of Bannockburn is from Scotsmen of the present day. Jerusalem enjoyed a geographical supremacy. It was the chief 'place' in the Christian world. In this sense wrote Avitus of Vienne to the Bishop of Jerusalem at the end of the fifth century that his See was the 'principem locum in ecclesia.' The two words have, of course, been mistranslated as 'supreme rank' and used against the Primacy of Rome and the orthodoxy of St. Avitus.[1]

A little thought and a little plain common sense, without any knowledge of the documents, would

[1] By Ampère in his *Histoire de la Littérature*, p. 200: 'Il occupe le rang suprême dans l'Eglise universelle (principem locum in universa Ecclesia).'

have enabled any student of history to realise that in the sixth century, and for long after, Christians had a special observance of place which expressed itself in pilgrimages.

In the fifth and sixth centuries special reverence was paid to Rome, quite apart from all questions of jurisdiction, as a place where the Apostles had been martyred and where their relics are enshrined. As a 'place' Rome ranked high, but not so high as Jerusalem. Columbanus was careful to make the sentimental distinction.[1] In so doing he was once again following the example of St. Jerome, who in one of his letters[2] went into some detail on this subject of the comparative reverence due to Rome and to Jerusalem.

Jerome wrote that Rome, although it held 'the true confession of Faith,' was not a place suitable to a monastic life, and he quotes the text 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins' in a passage which when isolated, as it frequently has been, from the context, represents the writer as an even more determined opponent of the Papacy than the pseudo-Columbanus of popular history.

There seems to be no escape from the fact that the letters of St. Columbanus have not been fairly handled by historians. The pun about the living dog, the reference to Jerome and the Western Churches, the contrast between Rome and Jerusalem, have been given an emphasis which they do not deserve and a meaning which they do not contain.

[1] The early Irish Church had an extraordinary attachment to the 'locus resurrectionis' of Saints (hence superstitions connected with burial in their cemeteries; see Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Oxford, 1910, vol. i. p. xciii). How much more would the Irish venerate the 'place of the Lord's resurrection'! It should be noted that Columbanus speaks of resurrection, not of crucifixion as we would.

[2] xlvi., to Marcella.

In no sense can the historical Columbanus be described as an enemy of the Pope. He was neither prejudiced nor prepossessed against the Roman See.

Columbanus accepted on behalf of 'the Western Churches' the supremacy of the Papacy as it stood in the fourth century and as recognised by Jerome; if he had objected to that supremacy as it stood in the sixth century he could not have written to Pope Boniface IV:

> 'We are bound to the chair of Peter' and 'Rome is the head of the churches of the whole world . . . do thou follow Peter; and let the whole Church follow thee.'

No words can be more definite than these—they express the mind of Columbanus; in the absence of evidence to the contrary it is safe to assume that they express also the mind of St. Columba and his monks at Iona, for between Ireland and Iona there was no division but the sea.

That in the time of St. Columba, and for quite a long time after his death, Scotland was materially isolated from Rome seems to be a safe conjecture, although it is largely based on a negative argument, the silence of surviving documents.

Remote, thinly populated, Scotland was probably known, to the few Roman ecclesiastics who were able to distinguish that country from Ireland, only as a wilderness of half-naked and illiterate savages.[1]

With perpetual civil war raging in Gaul, regular overland communication between Rome and Scotland must have been out of the question; and the sea route to Ireland was equally perilous. Columbanus in his letter to Boniface IV seems to bear indirect

[1] People at Rome in the fifth century, and for a very long time after, had only very vague notions of ecclesiastical geography. Duchesne, *Early Hist. of Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 465. (Tr. C. Jenkins, London, 1924.)

witness to the terrors of his sea journey to some port on the northern coast of France.

But was there not something more than mere material isolation ?

There was probably a great deal more.

The unity of the Church has never been a passive thing; it has been and always must be a struggle against provincial and national instincts which lead to disintegration and are really at the bottom of every heresy in history. The Celtic nations were always a menace to Catholic unity. But there is no historical evidence to show that by Celts either in Ireland or in Scotland that unity was ever broken. And no one, not even St. Jerome, has spoken so strongly in defence of that unity as Columbanus, the monk of Bangor, Luxeuil, and Bobbio.

CHAPTER VII

ST. COLUMBANUS AND DR. W. F. SKENE

The correspondence of St. Columbanus with the See of Rome—A Latin text and Dr. Skene's translation—What did Columbanus really mean? Historians who do not verify their references—An unparalleled blunder.

A CRITICAL edition of the seven letters known to have been written by St. Columbanus, four to Popes, one to the Bishops of Gaul, two to his disciples, is given in the 'Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epist.,' vol. iii.

The text is based on manuscripts of the tenth and twelfth centuries and had previously been published by, among others, Patrick Fleming in 1667, and by Migne in the 'Patrologia Latina,' vol. lxxx. Both these versions are full of textual errors, but they are mostly unimportant and not of such a kind as to impair the general sense. The correspondence of St. Columbanus with the Roman See has therefore been accessible since the middle of the seventeenth century.

In the first letter, to Gregory the Great, written between 595 and 600, that is shortly after the arrival of the Irish monks in Gaul, St. Columbanus asks for the Pope's decision about the date upon which Easter should be celebrated. He also seeks for instruction as to what should be done about certain clerics who are guilty of simony and immorality. He regrets that for reasons of ill-health he is unable to go to Rome. From the second letter, to Pope Sabinian, written about 604, it appears that the letter to Gregory had not been answered; it was probably

never received. Columbanus repeats his request for a decision on the Easter question, and concludes with a quotation from the second canon of the Council of Constantinople where it had been laid down that Churches established among the 'barbarians' in foreign lands are to be allowed to follow their traditional customs.

The third and fourth letters were addressed to Pope Boniface IV between 612 and 615, after the arrival of St. Columbanus in Lombardy. Of these two letters, the first is the most interesting and the longest. It is indeed longer than all the others together. When Columbanus arrived in Italy, he met, perhaps for the first time since his departure from Ireland, heresy and schism in high places. In the north of Italy, Arianism was still alive, and the schism of the Three Chapters flourished vigorously.

He was warned by a certain Agrippinus, a schismatical bishop, that the Papacy had fallen into the heresy of Nestorius, and he wrote therefore, at the request of Agilulph, king of the Langobards, to ask the Pope to clear up the situation by calling together a synod in order to correct the error, which, if reports were true, had been committed. The letter reads as if Columbanus had been misinformed as to the history of this schism of the Three Chapters, and was in many places repeating sentiments dictated by King Agilulph. Owing to the frequency of contradictory expressions, the obscurity of certain portions of the text, the undoubted obscurity of the subject, this letter has been misinterpreted by historians generally.

The letter was really written by St. Columbanus. I have not been able to find any modern historian who has expressed doubt as to this fact except

Barnby (' Life of Gregory the Great '), who says that ' Clinton disputes its genuineness.'

I have not been able to trace the reference. It may be that Barnby had in mind the second and shorter letter to Pope Boniface, historically of little interest, which has been challenged by Seebass.

The chief historical interest of these Columban letters to various Popes is the contact which they reveal between Ireland, the Ultima Thule, and Rome, the centre of Christianity, at the close of the sixth century. How close this contact was, and of what nature it was, has not been correctly represented by the purveyors of popular history.

The correspondence of St. Columbanus has been almost unanimously regarded by modern historians as evidence that the Scoto-Irish Christians refused to acknowledge Papal authority. How this curious conclusion was reached is a remarkable story, which begins, as far as I can tell, with Dr. W. F. Skene, the well-known author of ' Celtic Scotland.'

These letters of St. Columbanus bear directly on the question of the relationship of the Celts to the Roman See; they express distinctly the character of the writer, the religious sentiments of his age and country; as Professor Bury has shown in his ' Life of St. Patrick,' they throw a much-needed light on the history of religious belief and organisation in Europe at the end of the sixth century.

Acquaintance with their reproduction in the 'Patrologia' could scarcely escape even the most primitive process of historical research.

Yet it is a fact that in almost every case where a modern Scottish historian has quoted from St. Columbanus the quotation has proved the writer's ignorance of the original text; and a genealogy of misquotation can be traced directly back to Dr. Skene.

The passage which has misled, I can say without exaggeration, practically all subsequent historians occurs in the second volume of 'Celtic Scotland,' where Skene described the arrival of the Irishmen in Gaul, a description which closes with the statement that the monks when asked 'who they were, and whence they came' made the following reply: 'We are Irish, dwelling at the very ends of the earth. We be men who receive naught beyond the doctrine of the evangelists and apostles. The Catholic faith, as it was first delivered by the successors of the holy apostles, is still maintained among us with unchanged fidelity.'[1]

Now the least important error that Skene has made here is to quote these words as if part of an address made by Columbanus and his monks on their arrival in Gaul, whereas they really are disjointed fragments, taken from a letter written in Northern Italy twenty years later, when the Irish monks had left Gaul, to Pope Boniface IV.

The words of St. Columbanus are attributed by Skene to the wrong time and place. This is carelessness, but, it might be said, a venial offence against historical truth.

Nothing, however, can excuse the fact that these words, thus inopportunely put into the mouth of St. Columbanus, are a travesty of the original text, as the following comparison with the letter in which they occur clearly shows. By means of important omissions, which I have here put in italics, Skene has completely altered the meaning of St. Columbanus.

Skene, 'Celtic Scotland,' vol. ii. p. 7:

'We are Irish, dwelling at the very ends of the earth. We be men who receive naught beyond the doctrine of the

[1] *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 7.

evangelists and apostles. The Catholic faith, as it was first delivered by the successors of the holy apostles, is still maintained among us with unchanged fidelity.'

Migne, 'Patrologia Latina,' vol. lxxx. col. 275:

'Nos *enim SS. Petri et Pauli et omnium discipulorum, divinum canonem spiritu sancto scribentium, discipuli* sumus, *toti* Heberi, ultimi habitatores mundi, nihil extra evangelicam et apostolicam doctrinam recipientes: *nullus haereticus, nullus iudaeus, nullus schismaticus fuit*; *sed* fides catholica, sicut *a vobis* primum sanctorum *scilicet* apostolorum successoribus, tradita est, inconcussa tenetur.'

What St. Columbanus really wrote to the Pope (not to the Gauls) is very different, and indeed quite contrary in meaning to the version given by Skene.

'For all we Irish living at the uttermost ends of the earth are the disciples of SS. Peter and Paul, and of all the disciples who wrote the sacred canon under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; receiving nothing outside the evangelical and apostolical doctrine; no heretic, no Jew, no schismatic was ever amongst us; but the Catholic Faith as it was first delivered to us from you, the successors, that is, of the holy apostles, is retained amongst us unchanged.'

Of course, the most important error of Skene consists in the omission of the words 'a vobis' and 'scilicet,' whereby he conceals from his readers, perhaps concealed from himself, the fact that Columbanus recognised the Popes as successors of the 'holy apostles.'

The correct and complete translation of this passage reveals historical points of interest which Skene did not appreciate. St. Columbanus, before coming to Italy, had quarrelled with the bishops of Gaul and also with Laurentius the Papal Envoy to Britain, and, according to Bede's account, had even refused to sit at table with Laurentius, because of the obstinate controversy over the date of Easter. It is

quite likely that the Gallic bishops, in conjunction with the Papal Envoy, may have sent a report to Rome reflecting adversely upon the orthodoxy and discipline of the Irishmen. The paragraph to which Skene meant to refer has all the appearance of having been framed to meet such an accusation. Columbanus begins with a profession of faith coupled with stress on the remoteness of Ireland from the centre of Christianity, a sore point with the Irish, and always brought up by their opponents in the dispute about Easter.

'We Irish,' he insists, 'are orthodox, in spite of the fact that we live at the uttermost ends of the earth.' He speaks almost as one on the defensive, forestalling possible accusations. 'No heretic, no Jew, no schismatic was ever amongst us.' He seems to protest against the accusation of keeping Easter on the same day as the Jews. (In the primitive stage of the Easter controversy the Churches of Asia Minor kept the feast on the 14th day of Nisan, which might or might not fall on a Sunday. Those who followed this Jewish tradition were known as 'Quartodecimans.' The practice was suppressed with some harshness in the third century by Pope Victor.)

St. Columbanus closes his profession of orthodoxy in words which, when they are quoted in full and correctly translated, leave little room for any doubt about the fidelity of the Irish to the See of Rome: 'but the Catholic Faith as it was first transmitted *from you*, the successors, that is, of the Holy Apostles, is still retained amongst us unchanged.' It would be difficult to construct a clearer, a more definite expression of adherence to a Christian unity that was both Roman and Catholic.

Among historians generally this sentence has never been attentively read. The important words

'a vobis' when not left out, as by Skene, have nearly always been mistranslated, or, I should say, the meaning of St. Columbanus has not been correctly rendered into English. The distinction is instructive. Columbanus actually said one thing, but clearly meant another. He wrote 'a vobis,' which is, of course, correctly translated 'by you,' but his real intention was to write 'from you.'

Professor Bury has fallen into the common error, a solitary blunder in his useful excursus on St. Columbanus ('Life of St. Patrick,' Appendix, p. 371). A mistake made by such an authority, and enunciated with particular emphasis, might well mislead subsequent inquirers. The words 'sicut a vobis primum tradita est,' writes Bury:

'might be taken to imply that Ireland received the Catholic faith directly from the Popes. This would be a misinterpretation. The words can only refer generally to the transmission and maintenance of orthodox doctrine at Rome.'[1]

And, in a footnote, 'Mr. Warren rightly rejects the pregnant meaning found in this passage by Döllinger.'

Now it so happens that Warren and Döllinger are both historians who were familiar with the text of Columbanus, and both quoted correctly and fully the passage here in question. The difference of opinion between them turns on the translation of the words 'a vobis.'

If these words can be taken to mean 'by you,' then Warren may be right, and the declaration of orthodoxy made by Columbanus is one to which even a modern nonconformist might subscribe; but if the meaning should prove to be 'from you,' then the significance of the whole passage is changed.

The discussion is really important because Colum-

[1] *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 371.

banus bears witness, and he is practically the only witness we have, not only to his own faith but to that of the Churches in Ireland and Scotland. What then did Columbanus mean ?

The answer can be found in the text of his own letter, where the words ' a vobis ' are repeated a few lines further on, and their meaning emphasised :

> ' For whatever I shall say, whether it be edifying or orthodox, will stand to your credit . . . since, as I have said, it comes from you.'

It is therefore evident that Columbanus, when he used the words ' sicut a vobis primum tradita est,' was speaking of the Catholic faith as first transmitted to the Irish *from* the successors of the Holy Apostles, and that the ' pregnant meaning ' found in his words by Döllinger is correct. If so, then Columbanus must be accepted as a witness to the fact that Ireland, and consequently Scotland, received the Catholic faith directly from Rome.[1]

If Columbanus had written to the Pope that he and his people held the Catholic Faith as it ' was first delivered by the successors of the Holy Apostles ' he would only have been repeating a claim put forward by nearly all heretics and schismatics ever since the beginning of Christianity.

Dr. Skene was able to present this version of what Columbanus had written only by omitting words

[1] The opportunities provided by the mistake of translating ' a vobis ' as ' by you ' were fully realised by Professor Killen of Belfast University, who quoted the whole passage correctly and wrote that ' Lanigan and other Roman Catholic writers misrepresent the meaning . . . Columbanus simply avers that the faith of his fellow countrymen was as pure as that which was held and taught *at first* by the Roman Church.' The Professor translated as follows : ' the Catholic Faith is preserved amongst us intact as it was *originally* handed down by you—I mean the successors of the Holy Apostles,' and then adds in a footnote that this expression ' successors of the Apostles ' indicates ' that the Bishop of Rome was only one among many entitled to that designation.' (*Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, vol. i. p. 49.)

essential to the understanding of the sentence, an omission probably due to ignorance of the full text.

Although Skene refers to the letter of Columbanus in the 'Patrologia' of Migne as if he had the volume at his elbow, there is little doubt that he was really relying on some intermediate authority. He quotes in a footnote, and quite correctly, only the first half of the Latin text of the passage in question, and I have not been able to find the passage so cut to pieces in any English or Scottish history published previously to 'Celtic Scotland.' (The whole paragraph is given correctly by W. G. Todd in his 'History of the Ancient Church in Celtic Ireland' 1845.) Skene's mishandling of St. Columbanus has had such far-reaching effects and involves, as I shall presently show, such blundering as is seldom found in the work of a reputable historian, that it was perhaps worth while trying to find out how he allowed himself to be so grievously led astray. Most continental scholars who have quoted from the letters of Columbanus have done so correctly and fully; even Ebrard, in 'Die iroschottische Missionskirche,' pp. 95, 96, gives a very fair extract.

I am sure that Skene relied upon a French source, and that the very last which any inquirer into this puzzle would be likely to suspect.

Who would not be surprised at the fact that this mutilated quotation to be found in 'Celtic Scotland,' vol. ii. p. 7, also occurs, almost word for word the same, in a correct English translation of Montalembert[1]?

Montalembert, who wrote from a point of view exactly opposite to that of Skene, may have misquoted Columbanus out of mere carelessness, or perhaps from some imagined necessity of literary form. He did not, of course, draw, as Skene did, a

[1] *Monks of the West*, vol. ii. p. 441, Blackwood, 1861.

wrong conclusion. Columbanus has really been most unfortunate in his interpreters. It is almost impossible to find in the nineteenth century a single Scottish historian of whom it can be said with any certainty that he has read at first hand the correspondence of this famous Irishman with the See of Rome.

The story of the historical treatment accorded to this question of the relationship of Columbanus to the Papacy illustrates with remarkable precision an observation of Dryden's, which I found long ago in an old handbook of quotations and which I have not been able to trace to its source. Many Professors, every student, every reader of history should be made to learn these words by heart :

> 'We find but few historians of all ages who have been diligent enough in their search for truth ; it is their common method to take on trust what they deliver to the public ; by which means a falsehood once received from a famous writer becomes traditional to posterity.'

Wherever Skene got his authority, it is certain that his version of what St. Columbanus wrote to the Pope is susceptible of a meaning directly contrary to the truth, and as a matter of fact a false interpretation has been almost universally adopted by later writers. Skene's mishandling of this text has created a tradition among teachers of Scottish history who have taken his quotation on trust without ever taking the trouble to consult the original document. That historians have not looked at a text is a negative statement not always easy of proof, but in this case the proof is, as will be shown, incontrovertible.

A once popular textbook entitled 'The Church of Scotland Past and Present,' 1890–91, 5 vols. (edited by R. H. Story, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, and Principal of Glasgow University, 1895–1907), may be taken as representative of Scottish

nineteenth-century guide books to local Church history.

'In a letter addressed to the Pope, to whom he appealed, he thus wrote in his own defence: "We are Irishmen, inhabitants of the most distant country of the world, disciples of Peter and Paul, and of all the inspired writers of Scripture; and we receive nothing beyond the doctrines of the evangelists and prophets." And he claimed the right to follow the customs of his fathers, as belonging to a Church among the barbarians, and thus beyond the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Rome, just as if he were still in his own land.' [1]

Here St. Columbanus is represented as denying the jurisdiction of the Pope on the strength of the passage from his letter to Pope Boniface which is given according to the version of Skene with a reference to 'Celtic Scotland,' ii. 7, but with no mention of where the original may be consulted. The Rev. James Rankine, in the fourth edition of his 'Handbook of the Church of Scotland' (Edin. 1888), p. 23, maintains that there is a strong case for the independence of a Church 'which emphasised teaching and preaching and made a special appeal to Scripture for doctrine,' and he adds 'this is a feature which still characterises the Church of Scotland.' In support of this proposition, the following note is appended: 'St. Columbanus gives this account of himself and his companions in a letter to Boniface the IV, "We are Irish, etc., etc., etc."' The reference given is to 'Celtic Scotland,' vol. ii, p. 6, and not a word of the original source.

Mr. Stephen, in his 'History of the Scottish Church,' vol. i. p. 119, repeats Skene's blunder without, however, giving any reference, and implying by the use of inverted commas that he is quoting directly from the text of St. Columbanus.

[1] *The Church of Scotland Past and Present*, vol. i. p. 129.

'In an epistle to Pope Boniface IV, Columbanus defended himself and order: "we are all of us Irish: a people that inhabit the ends of the earth, and we receive nothing except the doctrine of the evangelists and apostles."' [1]

The usual corollary only appears in vol. ii. p. 670, where Mr. Stephen, arguing with some heat against Bellesheim, remarks:

'It would be easy to show and has been shown in the first volume of this work, that the ancient Celtic Church was episcopal and Catholic in all respects, and Roman Catholic in none.'

The effect of Skene's mistake spread far beyond sectarian circles, and can be traced in many modern textbooks.

Lavisse et Rambaud, in 'L'Histoire générale du iv^e^ siècle à nos jours,' were certainly sent astray by Skene and certainly had never read the letters of Columbanus, for they wrote that, in the Irish Church,

'the service was conducted in the vulgar tongue, not in Latin; the authority of the Bible was alone recognised, that of the Fathers and of the Roman tradition was rejected.' [2]

The source of this series of erroneous statements is betrayed by the fact that it was Skene who first made the assumption that in the Scottish Church Mass was said in Gaelic.[3]

The question whether or not Mass was said in Gaelic by early Scottish Christians is a detail of small consequence. But Skene's mishandling of St. Columbanus is a matter of serious importance, fundamental to the proper understanding of early Scottish church history.

Still more important is the fact, which here can be proved, that the historians who have formed

[1] Vol. i. p. 119.

[2] Paris, 1893, vol. i. p. 254.

[3] See Appendix II.

public opinion in Scotland, who have repeated unanimously that Columbanus was an enemy of the Papacy, a sort of primitive nonconformist, have written solely upon the authority of Skene and have not taken the trouble to consult the historical documents; they have 'taken on trust what they have delivered to the public.'

The proof is provided by Andrew Lang, who convicts not only himself but many other writers of relying solely upon Skene and of ignorance of the text written by St. Columbanus. Of this proof no one, as far as I am aware, has ever taken any notice.

Lang, in his 'History of Scotland,' observed that the Columban monks 'said, in rather a Protestant spirit, that they "accepted nothing outside the evangelical and apostolic doctrine."'[1]

He gave the complete reference to 'Celtic Scotland,' vol. ii. p. 7, and, what is most important, also to the letters of Columbanus in the 'Patrologia' of Migne *exactly as given by Skene*, viz. *vol. xxxvii.* Lang's ignorance of the original is thus vouched for by himself because Skene's reference is wrong. The letters of St. Columbanus are in volume lxxx.

It is clear that the writers whose names I have mentioned, Story, Rankine, Stephen, Lavisse et Rambaud, and many others might be added to these, did not look at the text in the 'Patrologia,' because not one of them has noticed the wrong reference; they have all, as Dryden said was the custom of popular historians, 'taken on trust what they have delivered to the public.'

The falsehood taken from a famous writer has become traditional to posterity, and it will doubtless long remain in the textbooks out of which history is taught to the Scottish people.

[1] 2nd ed., 1900, vol. i. p. 34.

Skene's blunder must be regarded as one of the most complete in historical literature.

(1) He attributes words to St. Columbanus, and is wrong both in the time and the place alleged ;

(2) he juggles with the words themselves so as to reverse their meaning ;

(3) he gives a wrong reference, which cannot be a casual misprint because it is repeated four times, and every time wrong [1] ;

(4) his blunders remain unnoticed by critics and compilers, and are accepted by modern scholars as true history.

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 7, 10, 50, 422.

CHAPTER VIII

POPE GREGORY THE GREAT, ST. COLUMBANUS, QUEEN BRUNHILDA

Columbanus in sixth-century Gaul—Gregory the Great and Queen Brunhilda: a double miscarriage of justice—More patchwork—The verdict of History reversed.

JONAS the monk of Bobbio, who at the command of his superior wrote a Life of St. Columbanus, must be classified among the worst of many incapable Celtic biographers. There was at Bobbio sufficient material available to construct an accurate record of the Founder's life. But Jonas omits almost every detail of practical interest and seldom mentions a single incident in the career of his hero without clumsily transforming it into a miracle.[1]

The reasons which prompted the departure of Columbanus from his monastery at Bangor are not known. His biographer declares that the saint was inspired by a desire to imitate the wanderings of Abraham. If there had been a political reason, a material explanation of his departure, Jonas would certainly have suppressed it. Owing to the methods adopted by these Irish hagiographers, and indeed by hagiographers in general, it is extremely difficult for any incident to be truly reported which is not to

[1] To accept as historical the whimsical fairy tales incorporated into the lives of Irish saints seems not to be beyond the range of Irish credulity even at the present day. See *The Life of St. Columban*, Dublin, 1915, by Mrs. Thomas Concannon. Here no attempt is made to inform the reader that the ever-recurring miracles of Irish hagiography have no place in history.

the credit of their heroes, their country, and their religion.

The adage that 'Good wine needs no bush' has never been popular in the Isle of Saints. I cannot see any ground for the assumption, usually made by historians, that Columbanus and his companions set forth from Ireland, as Hodgkin puts it,' bent on preaching the Gospel.' These Irish emigrants were monks. They were not, as Michelet, Ampère, etc., have asserted, reforming missionaries determined to preach pure doctrine to the corrupt clergy of Gaul. (Here we have an explanation of why Puller in his 'Primitive Saints' spoke of St. Columbanus as the 'glorious missionary'; glorious because he attacked the Pope and preached primitive Christianity to corrupt continentals.) The picture is wholly imaginary. Missionary work, in the modern meaning of the words, could not have been on the programme of the Irish exiles. They went to a country which, though distracted and distressed with prolonged civil wars, from which the more fortunate Ireland was doubtless free, had need of missionaries no more and no less than at the present day.

At the end of the sixth century, Gaul was provided with an ecclesiastical organisation which, in spite of chronic civil war conducted by a bloodthirsty nobility, maintained in its own ranks a comparatively high standard of morality and learning.

It is true that some of the bishops were unworthy; one or two were abominable scoundrels.[1]

'Such instances of individual failure,' wrote the late Sir Samuel Dill, 'must not be taken as characteristic of ecclesiastical life in the Merovingian age. They are rather glaring exceptions to a general dignity and even eminence of virtue and ability, to which the strength and influence of the

[1] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, iv. 12.

Episcopate is the best testimony. We may indeed venture to say that never in the long history of the Church of Rome did her bishops wield a greater power than in sixth-century Gaul. They were independent to a great degree of the central authority of the Papacy. They were men of rank and learning. . . . They provided the one stable element in the changing society of the age . . . while the steady march of ecclesiastical polity continued uninterruptedly under their leadership.' [1]

Upon the slow progress of civilisation, admirably directed by the Gallic bishops, the arrival of a few Irish monks made little impression.[2] Columbanus made no attempt to set himself up against ecclesiastical authority; he arrived in Gaul without any fuss; he was looking for some quiet spot where he and his disciples could live according to their own strict rule with an independence which perhaps in Ireland had proved impossible.

When the Irishmen landed, probably at one of the Channel ports, about 590, Gaul was roughly divided into three kingdoms—Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy—ruled over by three brothers who were always fighting, Chilperic, Sigebert, and Guntrum. Columbanus decided to establish his community in Burgundy under the protection of the 'good' King Guntrum, who allowed the monks to settle in the wild forests of the Vosges; no missionary centre this.

Here they followed for *nearly twenty years* the usual monastic routine, occupied with the three primal necessities of civilisation—religion, literature, and agriculture.

The isolation was, however, ultimately broken by the pressure of political events, and Columbanus

[1] *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age*, London 1926, p. 502.

[2] J. von Pflugk-Harttung in *The Old Irish on the Continent* (Trans. of the Royal Hist. Society, New Series, v. 1891) is of opinion that 'Columbanus' influence is often over-estimated.'

stepped from his monastery into the pages of European history. To understand the political situation with which the immigrants were confronted nearly twenty years after they had left Ireland, and which led to a renewal of their wanderings, it is necessary to study the personality of Queen Brunhilda, one of the greatest women rulers that Europe has known.

Sigebert, King of Austrasia, had married in 568 Brunhilda, a princess from Spain, remarkable, according to the testimony of the historian Gregory of Tours, for 'beauty, distinction of manner, charm, and sound moral training.' [1]

Of this marriage were born a son and two daughters. The tragic story of this unfortunate Queen opens with seven years of married happiness and peace, which, during her long life, and not through her own fault, she was never to know again.

During these quiet years, jealous hatred was silently at work in the Kingdom of Neustria, where her brother-in-law King Chilperic lived, like most of the Merovingian princes, a life of gross immorality.

Inspired by the example of Sigebert, he expressed a wish to give up his sordid amours and marry a princess worthy of his royal station. After taking solemn oaths to reform, he was accorded the hand of Brunhilda's elder sister, Galeswinte. Chilperic did not keep his promise; at the instigation of his criminal associate, Fredegonde, the poor princess was cruelly put to death.

Brunhilda appealed for justice to King Guntrum of Burgundy, and Chilperic was compelled to surrender part of his territory to Austrasia in compensation for the crime.

[1] 'Erat enim puella elegans opere, venusta aspectu, honesta moribus atque decora, prudens consilio et blanda conloquio.' (*Hist. Francorum*, lib. iv. c. 27.)

A long struggle followed between the two kingdoms, marked by repeated acts of clemency on the part of Sigebert and of perfidy on the part of Chilperic.

Sigebert, in the moment of victory over his treacherous brother, was assassinated by emissaries of the blood-stained Fredegonde. Brunhilda, now a prisoner with her little son, faced the situation with energy and resource. She managed to arrange for the escape of the boy Childebert, who was carried safely back to Austrasia and there recognised by the nobles as lawful King.

The situation of the Queen after the assassination of her husband can be compared to that of Mary after the murder of Darnley; it was really very much worse. She was threatened with immediate death, whether by poison, secret dagger, or open murder, she could not tell. She saved herself for her boy's sake, of that there can be little doubt; she married the son of her husband's murderess.

Merovee, son of Chilperic, fell to the charm and beauty of Brunhilda; they were married, in defiance of canon law, by Bishop Pretextatus at Rouen, where the Queen was a prisoner. Gregory of Tours, in his account of this drama, is sparing of comment and unfortunately also of detail. He only gives the outline of the story.

Many historians have smugly blamed the Queen for such treachery to the memory of her murdered husband. But the full force of these terrible events is missed unless the fact be realised, which the study of her life makes certain, that the Queen loved and respected her husband Sigebert, the noblest of all the Merovingian race. The boy Childebert was alive and safe, for the moment, in Austrasia; but not safe for long, if alone and an orphan, from the fury of Fredegonde.

To marry the weak youth Merovee offered a chance of safety for herself, her boy, and his inheritance. Small wonder, all the same, wrote Kurth, 'if the spectre of the murdered father were present at the marriage.'

The very next day Merovee was pursued by the enraged Chilperic, caught and shut up in a monastery; he vainly endeavoured to rejoin Brunhilda, and shortly afterwards committed suicide.

Meantime the Queen had succeeded in returning to Austrasia. For eight years she continued to struggle against the constant intrigues of Chilperic and Fredegonde, until in 583 she succeeded in establishing her son firmly upon his throne. Shortly after this, Chilperic was assassinated, and legend, with impartial improbability, has accused sometimes Brunhilda, and sometimes Fredegonde, of directing the hand of the unknown criminal.

In 592 King Guntrum died in his bed; Childebert succeeded him, and for three years ruled over Austrasia and Burgundy. In 595 the young King died a sudden but apparently natural death. Brunhilda, left with the charge of two grandsons, Theoderic and Theodebert, ruled as Queen Regent over the two kingdoms.

She was once more alone to face the revengeful, jealous Fredegonde and the no less savage nobles of her own kingdom. The darkest pages of her story were as yet unturned.

At the time, therefore, when St. Columbanus arrived in Gaul, *circa* 590, there was a lull in the storm through which the Queen had lived.

Knowledge of history in Gaul up to this date is based on the 'Historia Francorum' left by Gregory of Tours, an accurate and reliable chronicle which, unfortunately, ends with the year 591. Gregory does not mention the name of Columbanus and had

probably never heard of the arrival of the Irish monks in Burgundy.

For the story of St. Columbanus in Gaul, of his meeting and quarrelling with the Queen, there is no contemporary witness. The chief, if not the only source of information, is the monk Jonas of Bobbio. The narrative of Jonas strikes a new note.

Brunhilda is represented as a second Fredegonde; she is accused of encouraging the immorality of her grandchildren, who took after their villainous grand-uncle Chilperic. According to Jonas, Columbanus, on first meeting the Queen, was asked by her to bless the illegitimate offspring of her grandchildren, and indignantly refused.

This incident, which cannot be checked by any evidence from Brunhilda's side, finally led to the expulsion of Columbanus and his monks from Gaul. This description of the Queen as an immoral and wicked old woman is not in harmony with the history of her youth and early middle age as told by Gregory of Tours, or with what remains of her correspondence with Pope Gregory the Great, who is a witness to her good character.

The Pope wrote, in 595, to congratulate her on the care she had taken with the education of Childebert and also praised her zealous interest in religion as shown by the building of monasteries, churches, and refuges for the poor and sick. When St. Augustine was sent to England, the Pope gave him letters of introduction to Brunhilda, through whose territory he had to pass, and the Queen received the missionaries with generous hospitality. For this also she received from Gregory a letter of congratulation. He wrote also several times entreating her, with some energy, to suppress simony, and until his death in 604 acted as her good friend and counsellor.

The ten letters of Pope Gregory to Brunhilda are printed in 'M. G. H. Ep.,' vols. i. and ii. They are written in dignified language and with the politeness, but no more than the politeness, that the circumstances demanded. The Pope repeatedly sends instructions and advice to the Queen as to the management of affairs of Church and State; he insists, with a distinct note of sternness, on the urgency of suppressing simony and maintaining discipline among the Gallic clergy. 'Nam causa sunt ruinae populi sacerdotes mali.'[1]

There are thus two versions of the Queen's character. On one side are Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great, both contemporaries, the most distinguished men of the age, and in a position to know the facts. On the other is Jonas, the monk of Bobbio, not a contemporary, obscure in his own day and known to posterity only through the survival of his hagiographical writings.

Now it is a curious fact that nearly all historians, both ancient and modern, have followed Jonas. Among the rare exceptions are Bossuet and Sir Charles Oman, who both refuse to follow the popular tradition.

Most Catholic historians have shown no mercy to the memory of Brunhilda. Ozanam[2] calls her 'a second Jezebel.' Montalembert accuses her of murdering St. Didier, a charge for which history can show no shadow of evidence.

Healy, in 'Irish Saints and Scholars,' speaks of her as the 'infamous Queen-mother.' D'Alton, in his 'History of Ireland' (1904), denounces her with thoughtless rhetoric:

[1] Ep. xi. 46. M. G. H., tom. 2, p. 319.

[2] *La Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, Paris, 1872 (5th ed.), p. 133.

'Greedy of absolute power, blind to religious obligations, deaf to the voice of nature itself . . . the struggle between St. Columbanus and the wicked old woman was bitter and prolonged.' [1]

How firmly a belief in the wickedness of this unfortunate Queen has been established in the popular mind may be realised from the fact that, during the trial of Marie-Antoinette, the Public Prosecutor could think of no insult more likely to meet with public appreciation than to compare his innocent victim to the 'infamous Queen Brunhilda.' [2] This 'wickedness' of the Queen has an interest and an importance which extend further than the local history of Gaul in the sixth century because her name has been coupled with that of Gregory the Great, who has been accused of having connived for political reasons at her criminal misconduct.

This accusation has been so widely and so consistently repeated that it may be said to have a definite and almost unshakable position in the historical textbooks used in this country.

The charge against Pope Gregory is false. Although repeated by successive generations of respected historians, the falsehood could have been at any time recognised by anyone who took the trouble to look at the evidence.

Conclusive proof of this falsehood can be stated in a few paragraphs; could have been so stated at any time during the last three centuries, as the facts have always been accessible. But the popular historians in England and in Scotland did not look at

[1] Vol. i. p. 65.

[2] 'à l'instar des Messaline, Brunehault, Fredegonde, et Médicis, que l'on qualifiait autrefois de reines de France, et dont les noms, à jamais odieux, ne s'effaceront pas des fastes de l'histoire, Marie-Antoinette, veuve de Louis Capet, a été, depuis son séjour en France, le fléau et la sangsue des Français, etc.' (Fouquier Tinville, Public Prosecutor in trial of Marie-Antoinette, October 14, 1793.)

the evidence. They copied the scandal one from the other without the slightest suspicion entering their minds that they were propagating an infamous calumny.

Historians in the nineteenth century were almost unanimous in this attack on Pope Gregory. The unedifying story has been taught to generations of university students, has been repeated in all the school books, has its place of honour in the encyclopedias, and has been confirmed by scholars of world-wide repute.

The story was part of the great anti-Papal tradition. That Gregory winked at the murders and immoral intrigues of which Queen Brunhilda has been accused, was repeated by historians without hesitation, not only because from the popular point of view it was just what might be expected, but because there was already a similar tale to the discredit of this great Pope. Historians had registered against him a 'previous conviction.' Everyone knew how, when the Emperor Phocas in Constantinople had succeeded to the throne, after murdering his predecessor Maurice with peculiar brutality, Gregory wrote him a letter of fulsome congratulation.

To many British historians in the eighteenth century, convinced as they were that the word 'Pope' was synonymous with 'anti-Christ,' the character and record of Gregory, who could not be refused the title of 'great,' had been a cause of embarrassment. For it was not enough to assert that his humility was affected, that his services to the civilisation of Europe had been prompted solely by ambition, or that his zeal for reform was merely an artful dodge for the advancement of his office. Something more than mere assertion was required to tarnish the reputation of so great a man.

The letter to Phocas provided exactly what was wanted. Here even the greatest of Popes was discovered to be, alas! no better than the others.

It is difficult to give any idea of the joy with which this discovery was hailed in the eighteenth century, by generations of both British and Continental historians, without quoting a long series of extracts from writers whose names and works are forgotten, although the errors which they helped to propagate still live.

'Here was a stain on the character of Gregory which all his virtues will never wipe out. And what can we expect from other Popes when even a *Gregory* did not scruple to employ, and by employing to sanctify, in the opinion of his successors, the most criminal methods to support and maintain the dignity of his See?' (vol. ii. p. 5).

So cheerfully concluded Bower, the apostate Jesuit, in his 'History of the Popes,' published in 1749. The book contains a printed list of over two thousand subscribers, most of whom were peers, squires, or parsons.[1]

About the same time a German historian,[2] C. W. F. Walch, alluding to this letter, improved upon the growing calumny:

'The greatest stain on the memory of the Pope was an extravagant panegyric which he pronounced on that profligate wretch Phocas.'

[1] Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, Oxford, 1885, is the most recent historian who has used this antiquated specimen of no-popery literature, which he says, however, is 'far too bitter and polemical' (vol. iv. chapter iv. p. 83). Dr. Oliver, in his *Collections towards Illustrating the Biography of the Scotch, English, and Irish Members of the Society of Jesus*, London, 1845, has the following note: 'Rev. Archibald Bower, born at Dundee 1686, entered the Society at Rome 1706, died Sept. 3rd, 1766. All lovers of truth and honesty regarded him, living and dying, as an unprincipled impostor, and a disgrace to any religious denomination' (p. 40).

[2] *A compendious History of the Popes* (translated from the German), London, 1759, p: 82. C: W. F. Walch, said Harnack, was an historian 'who made an effort to be impartial.' (*History of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 28.)

Bolingbroke, however, did even better; he wrote that Gregory 'flattered Brunhault and abetted Phocas.' [1]

Soon to a wider audience the story was to be broadcasted by Gibbon with a venom which never failed when opportunity was presented to slander Pope, priest, or monk.

'The joyful applause with which he (Gregory) salutes the fortune of the assassin has sullied with indelible disgrace the character of the saint.' [2]

This verdict of the unchallengeable Gibbon, whose 'sentence cannot be gainsaid,' was sufficient to satisfy the compilers of historical textbooks and encyclopedias which spread the information among the English-speaking race. Here, as was often the case when the reputation of the Papacy was concerned, Gibbon condemned Gregory without weighing the evidence.

For the gravamen of the charge depends on the assumption that the Pope, when he wrote to Phocas, knew that he had succeeded to the throne by violently murdering his predecessor. This has been properly recognised in the 'Cambridge Medieval History' [3]:

'We are shocked as we read Gregory's cordial letters to the brutal murderer of the Emperor Maurice; but we must remember that the Pope had no representative at Constantinople to tell him what had happened . . . he wrote as an official of the Church to an official of the State and he mingled with his formal words of congratulation . . . no words of personal adulation.'

Both from the occasion and the text it is evident that the letter was a formal document; Gibbon, who had read nearly everything, quotes part of it in a footnote. But to describe the official words of the

[1] *Letters on the Study of History*, vol. i. p. 131.
[2] Vol. v. p. 64.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 251 (1913).

Pope as 'base flattery' is unhistorical. Such a judgment is clearly the result of bias. Anyone with a sense of justice must admit that if any name here is 'sullied with disgrace,' it may be the name not of Gregory but of Gibbon.

Textbooks published previous to the 'Cambridge History' (1913) almost invariably followed Gibbon.

Even Hodgkin, usually a critical student of the sources, did not make any allowance for the diplomatic character of the Pope's letter, or for the conditions under which it was written, although he was too well informed about the history of Gaul in the sixth century to accuse Gregory of flattering Brunhilda.

'I do not,' he wrote, 'like many authors, couple the name of Brunichildis with that of Phocas, in considering the indictment against Gregory. His letters to the Austrasian Queen are too courtly, too eulogistic; but after all she was a great Queen, and her really atrocious crimes were, I think we may safely say, all committed after the death of Gregory.'[1]

Hodgkin did not discuss the possibility that Gregory might have had no knowledge of the events at Constantinople:

'the one great blot on his escutcheon, his jubilation over the downfall of Maurice, and his fulsome praise of the tyrant his successor, can be palliated by no lover of truth and justice.'[2]

Gregorovius was equally decisive:

'Only with shame can we read these letters. They constitute the single stain on the life of the great man, and remain to detract from his renown.'[3]

On this same question, says this historian in a footnote, 'Gibbon and Bayle speak the truth.'

However, after all these decisions it is clear that

[1] *Italy and her Invaders*, vol. v. p. 452.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 451.
[3] *Rome in the Middle Ages*, Eng. tr., London, 1902, vol. ii. p. 67.

when Gregory is brought into court on the charge of flattering the vices of Queen Brunhilda, he will stand in the dock with the handicap of a previous conviction.

Historians often took both charges simultaneously. I have traced the double calumny back to Bayle's 'Historical Dictionary,' whence it has trickled through all the historical literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

James Craigie Robertson, 'History of the Christian Church,' 2 vols., London, 1856, put the case in a footnote (vol. ii. p. 12):

> 'Gregory's frequent compliments to the Frankish Queen Brunichild afford grounds for the same sort of charges with his letter to Phocas.'

Lecky included the story in his collection of gossip, often copied from the scandalmonger Sismondi, entitled 'A History of European Morals'; here it was found by Duncan Keith and used to adorn 'A Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland.' No attempt was made by any of these writers to study the original documents, and the double impeachment of the Pope was accepted on mere hearsay and repeated, often with a note of sanctimonious humbug, by teachers of Church history who were regarded in the nineteenth century as moderate.

The new moderation consisted in saying that by no means were all the Popes to be regarded as monsters of iniquity; most of course had lived corrupt and immoral lives, but a few out of the number were really great men. But even these were never completely free, alas! from serious moral blemish, and always showed themselves ready to use and justify the most unworthy means in order to consolidate the Papal power.

So the Professors did not bother to look up the documents; they did not read the letter to Phocas; they did not know the dates of Pope Gregory's letters to Queen Brunhilda; they condemned Gregory at once and passed the news on to their pupils.

The following sample, which fairly represents the method and style of teaching Papal history which prevailed in many university circles during the nineteenth century, is taken from the work of James Craigie Robertson, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London, who published his lectures in a book with the ominous title 'The Growth of the Papal Power' (S.P.C.K., 1876).

Here Pope Gregory met with short shrift. The verdict of *guilty*, obviously delivered without examination of the actual evidence, concludes with an echo of the mid-Victorian snuffle:

> 'There are, indeed, two special blots on his character, and although attempts have been made by some writers of more zeal than discretion to wash out those blots, there they remain. I mean (1) his subservient behaviour to the Emperor Phocas . . . and (2) his frequent compliments to the Frankish Queen Brunhault, who, unless she has been misrepresented more than probability will allow us to suppose, was a very strange object for the praise which Gregory bestows upon her. These things are no doubt unpleasant to read, etc., etc., etc.' (p. 116).

Gregory's alleged flattery of the infamous Queen Brunhilda has been useful to many historians, not only as an occasion for a homily on the subject of Papal iniquities, but as a chance for making a comparison between the cringing snobbery of a Pope and the stern independence of Columbanus. See, exclaimed the teachers, what a chasm divides the Latin from the Celtic and Teutonic morality!

A collection of articles contributed by G. W. Cox to the 'Edinburgh Review,' and reprinted in 1870

with the title 'Latin and Teutonic Christendom' will serve to show what hundreds of historians and thousands of teachers repeated about Pope Gregory during the nineteenth century, without thinking, without asking for or looking for proofs:

'Unlike Gregory, who could stoop to eulogise the murderer of Maurice, Columban had no words but those of vehement condemnation for Brunhault' (p. 197).

The point was not missed in Scotland. To illustrate the moral superiority of the Celts over the Latins, Dr. MacEwen, a Professor of History in New College, Edinburgh, wrote in 1914, with confident adjectives:

'[St. Columbanus] came into collision with Brunhilda, the reckless and infamous queen-regent to whom the Pope had written with unworthy adulation.'[1]

The same line of argument has been developed by the Rev. A. B. Scott, in 'Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness,' with a patriotic vigour worthy of James Macpherson.

As long as there continues to exist in Scotland a large number of uncritically minded people who are not interested to hear about the Papacy anything but what is unedifying, so long will Professors and teachers of history be found willing to supply what is wanted.

The guilt of Gregory the Great on the double count of his letter to Phocas and his flattery of Brunhilda was accepted without hesitation by the historians of the nineteenth century on the grounds that a Pope is more likely than not to do such things. The evidence was either not examined or not examined fairly. Even so careful a scholar as Bury was not able on this occasion to escape the influence of a judgment which, although in every case a

[1] *A History of the Church in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 44.

prejudgment, was the almost unanimous decision of historians.

As Hallam wrote in 'Middle Ages,'[1] 'the flattering style in which this pontiff (Gregory) addressed Brunhault and Phocas, the most flagitious monster of his time, is mentioned in all civil and ecclesiastical histories.' I think there is little doubt that Bury allowed his critical sense to be overwhelmed by the unanimity of previous historians.

In his 'History of the Later Roman Empire' he presents the case against Gregory at some length:

'It has been especially urged that there was no apocrisiarius at Constantinople at the time to inform him [Gregory] of the details, and that he had merely heard the bare fact that Phocas had succeeded Maurice. Here again we have no proof of the extent of the Pope's information; but it seems gratuitous to assume that he knew nothing of the details. Such an assumption would not be made in the case of anyone but a saint; the ground for the exception being that the character of a saint is inconsistent with the authorship of a letter in which the perpetrator of such acts as those of Phocas is not merely acknowledged but eulogised. But we must remember the ideas which were prevalent at the time. . . . Maurice was, in the eyes of Gregory, a pestilence to the Empire and a foe to the Church; his death was a consummation eminently to be desired, and he who should achieve such a consummation was a person eminently to be blessed. There seems therefore no reason to suppose that Gregory was not aware that the feet of Phocas, as he ascended the throne, were stained with innocent blood; he looked upon the acts as a political necessity, for which it would have been hardly fair to condemn the new Emperor.

'It may be noted that the correspondence with Brunhilda and that with Phocas, taken together, make the case against assumption of ignorance stronger. If we assume knowledge in the one case we may assume it in the other, and it is gratuitous to assume ignorance in both cases.'[2]

[1] Vol. ii. p. 229 (London, 1819).

[2] *History of the Later Roman Empire*, London, 1889, vol. ii. p. 155.

It is important to notice exactly the process and the points of Bury's summing-up of the case against Pope Gregory.

The suggestion that, according to the 'ideas prevalent at the time,' Popes were likely to connive at murder when their interests were at stake is an expression of the prejudice of the court where the Pope is being tried; neither historically nor justly can such a statement be accepted as part of the evidence against the accused.

The case against the Pope, as presented by Bury, rests entirely upon the assumption of Queen Brunhilda's habitual misconduct, at the time, or before the time, she was receiving his letters of congratulation and praise.

If the conduct of the Queen had really been criminal the Pope must, of course, have been aware of the fact. It would then be quite logical to conclude that since the Pope could flatter Brunhilda, knowing her to be vicious, he might well have written to Phocas, knowing him to be a murderer. 'If we are to assume knowledge in the one case we may assume it in the other.' True.

But the whole argument rests upon a false premise. Gregory's ignorance of the crimes alleged against the Frankish Queen can be proved with a certainty unusual in history, because the charges brought against her concern incidents alleged to have occurred *after the Pope's death.*

If any witness were needed to testify to the sobriety of the Queen's conduct up to the death of Pope Gregory the testimony of St. Columbanus may be admitted. A few dates will make the point clear.

Gregory dies in 604; his last letter to the Queen was written in 602. But Columbanus did not 'come into collision' with Brunhilda till 610.

If then Gregory in Rome is to be blamed for his failure to reprimand Brunhilda in 602, the silence of Columbanus in Gaul is even more reprehensible.

But there is no more reason for asserting that the Pope had written 'with unworthy adulation' than for assuming that Columbanus, who was on the spot, had kept silent when he ought to have spoken.

For it is quite certain that, until after the Pope's death, the conduct of the Queen was neither 'reckless' nor 'infamous.'

The Pope wrote several letters to Brunhilda congratulating her upon her good works; he cannot be blamed for failure to foresee that after his death she would be accused, on the slenderest evidence, of all sorts of abominable crimes. The charge against Pope Gregory of having written to Phocas, knowing him to be a murderer, must therefore stand by itself, and the burden of proof that he had, or could reasonably be supposed to have had, such knowledge, rests with the accusers.

When a man is accused of conniving at murder he ought not to be condemned without proof, even if he is a saint of the Roman Church.

There is no evidence that Gregory knew what had happened at Constantinople; the presumption is all the other way. Phocas was crowned in November. He at once sent off special messengers to Rome, where they arrived at the end of April, almost exactly five months later. Gregory wrote in May.

Obviously the emissaries of Phocas would not say anything about the murder. How then could Gregory have known? Who was there at Constantinople ready to take the responsibility, the risk, of sending a special envoy to Rome to inform the Pope of what had happened? And even if such a messenger had been sent, how could he have arrived

as soon as, or even shortly after, the official expedition which would naturally have special transport facilities? The guilt of Gregory cannot be held as proved until these questions have been answered.

That so many modern historians should have repeated this serious charge against Gregory the Great, without having even considered these points, should not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

This is only one example, but a very bad one, of the way in which prejudices against the Papacy direct the verdict of history. How this might be done was shown by Gibbon. Historians in the nineteenth century have followed and often surpassed the master in the art of selecting, suppressing, hinting, and suggesting, without breaking the letter of the law 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' Is it not a serious breach of this law to condemn an accused person without first making a thorough examination of the evidence, without first trying to find some excuse or explanation of guilt, to rejoice that there be guilt, and to be silent, to make no protest when there has been a grievous miscarriage of justice?

Is there no public sense of the responsibility which rests upon Professors who sit in universities and are paid to read the documents which the public are not able or have not the time to examine?

Is the memory of a dead man, even a dead Pope, not entitled to fair play?

> 'There is a law,' wrote Cardinal Newman, 'binding us to think as well as we can of everyone; we ought to be glad when imputations are removed and scandals cleared up. And this law is observed by every generous mind.'

How far was this law observed by Lecky, Duncan Keith, G. W. Cox, or Craigie Robertson, and many more of their fellows? Did they not formulate

judgment in anticipation and welcome with relief a blot on the escutcheon of 'even the greatest of Popes'?

This is more than merely a small affair of ecclesiastical controversy. For behind such judgments lie hatreds, and jealousies, and malevolent ill-will, the ultimate causes of all the dissensions and misunderstandings, injustices and crooked dealings, obstinate controversy and stupid wars in past and present times. This prejudice is not much more than a name for ill-will, the determination to see things as we malevolently wish them to be.

Newman has written other words on this subject which have not only an historical but also a great social and moral importance:

> 'Perhaps it is wrong to compare sin with sin, but I declare to you, the more I think of it, the more intimately does this prejudice seem to me to corrupt the soul, even beyond those sins commonly called most deadly, as the various forms of impurity and pride.'

Textbooks go on printing, and teachers teaching, that Pope Gregory was after all no better than the others, that he was 'only too' ready to wink at murder and immorality. There is no *amende honorable*; no frank recognition of ancient errors; no apology for injustice to a great man and a great institution.

I have just taken down from the shelves of a friendly library a volume with attractive binding, printing, and illustrations, typical of the modern effort to make people read history, and representative also of the kind of history people are being given to read: 'Leaders and Landmarks in European History,' by A. R. Hope-Moncrieff and the Rev. H. J. Chaytor (London, 1914).

Pope Gregory is given his place as a leader and

landmark, but on page 180 the 'guilt' of both Pope and Queen is confirmed with confident emphasis: '*there seems no doubt* [italics mine] that Gregory stretched his conscience to stand well with the new power; as also he had too civil relations with the Frankish Queen Brunhild . . . a tenfold murderess.'

'There seems no doubt' that the compilers of 'Leaders and Landmarks' must have discovered some hitherto unsuspected source of information on the history of the sixth century. For although Gregory in their pages still only connives at murder, with the Frankish Queen that unpleasant crime has become a habit; and the 'guilt' of the Pope who has 'too civil relations' with such a monster is, of course, or alas, considerably aggravated.

Here we have another instance of the truth of Dryden's words, which should be written on the title-page of every historical textbook:

> 'We find but few historians of all ages who have been diligent enough in their search for truth; it is their common method to take on trust what they deliver to the public; by which means a falsehood once received from a famous writer becomes traditional to posterity.'

That such reckless charges of murder should be persistently repeated, in textbooks intended for popular use, by compilers who are ignorant not only of the documents but also of the modern literature of their subject, is a matter which calls for some attention.

The accusations brought by historians against Queen Brunhilda, the crimes she is accused of having committed *after the death of Pope Gregory*, her friend and counsellor, rest upon evidence of a more than doubtful character.

'Never has any writer of value,' wrote G. Kurth, 'failed to hesitate before the figure of Queen Brunhilda and ask himself whether she has really deserved the reputation she has been given in history.'[1]

Among the few English writers who have hesitated before condemning the Queen of the Franks the most noteworthy is Hallam, who deserves some credit for having felt a difficulty, but little for the manner in which he disposed of it. He coupled, like all his contemporaries, the name of Queen Brunhilda with that of her lifelong enemy Fredegonde; but he added in a footnote that there had been in the seventeenth century a difference of opinion among the critics as to the true character of the Frankish Queen, and he advised his readers to 'consult Pasquier on the one side . . . Gaillard on the other . . . the last is unfavourable to Brunhault and perfectly satisfactory to my judgment.'[2]

Not one reader in a thousand ever takes advice of this kind. The works of Pasquier and Gaillard are not in many libraries. 'Historians generally' were content to accept the judgment of Hallam, without bothering about the witnesses. They did not see, so limited was the horizon of mid-Victorian England, that even the names of these critics who appear for and against Brunhilda on the page of history suggest an *a priori* probability for a decision in favour of the Queen. Pasquier was the most critically minded writer of his day (1529–1615); Robert Flint, the great Scottish critic, has a favourable word

[1] *Études Franques*, vol. i. p. 266.

[2] *Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 6. In *Supplemental Notes*, published in 1848, Hallam modified his condemnation of Brunhilda. 'Much, therefore, may have been exaggerated by Fredegarius, a Burgundian by birth, in relating the crimes of Brunhault. But, unhappily, the antecedent presumption, in the history of that age, is always on the worse side' (p. 15).

for him in 'History of the Philosophy of History,' p. 188.

Gaillard showed in this controversy, as Kurth pointed out, 'an almost total absence of critical sense and does not refute a single objection of his adversaries.'

It seemed to Hallam and to his numerous disciples that upon this question of the Queen's reputation, fundamental to a correct knowledge of sixth-century Gaul, it was the sufficient duty of an historian to examine the opinions of previous inquirers and to be 'perfectly satisfied' *without making even a pretence of examining the sources.*

Practically all the historians in the nineteenth century agree in condemning Brunhilda. Probably some of them were unconsciously influenced by unworthy motives. Some saw in the antagonism of the Queen and St. Columbanus the old struggle between Church and State. They took sides against the Queen, not after analysing the character of the evidence, but at once and instinctively, on the general principle that it is 'wicked' to oppose the Church. On the other hand, the spectacle of a 'wicked old woman,' cursed by the Celt and flattered by the Pope, afforded to many writers a satisfaction partly insular, partly sectarian.

In this way was gradually built up the unanimous 'verdict of history.'

This verdict, by mere repetition, imposed itself upon the popular mind and received from all sides an incurious assent.

But the history of sixth-century Gaul made it necessary to restrict the alleged evil conduct of the Queen to her old age.

Montalembert, in 'Monks of the West,' kept close to the traditional story :

'Brunhault as she grew old . . . preserved neither generosity nor uprightness. Her thirst for sovereignty led her so far—she whose youth had been without reproach—as to encourage her grandsons in polygamy . . . she made her grandson repudiate his lawful bride. . . . St. Didier was murdered by ruffians . . . whom the queen-mother had laid in wait for him. . . .'[1]

Of these crimes the Queen was judged guilty by nearly all the historical opinion of the nineteenth century. For a contribution to this historical problem, characteristic of British popular historians in the nineteenth century, it will be sufficient to quote once again Professor G. T. Stokes, who states that Didier 'was murdered by the agents of the Queen-mother.'[2] The high authority of the 'Dictionary of Christian Biography' is given in a footnote. For this crime alleged against the Queen there is not a scrap of evidence; she has been condemned unheard; there has seldom in all history been a more remarkable miscarriage of justice.

Very little notice was taken in England, and still less in Scotland, of Kurth's rehabilitation of Brunhilda printed first about thirty-five years ago in the 'Revue des Questions Historiques.' This work is distinguished by a special mark of sincerity and independence of preconceived notions owing to the fact that the writer had already committed himself to the traditional story. He had painted a portrait of the Queen in his 'Origines de la Civilisation moderne' with what he afterwards described as the 'sombre colours of tradition.'

Kurth set himself to analyse the sources and to weigh the evidence. He found that the charges against Brunhilda, which historians had accepted

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 413–14.
[2] *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 140.

almost without question, are based on the authority of two sub-contemporaneous documents, both of which should be regarded with suspicion: the Life of St. Columbanus by Jonas, monk of Bobbio, and the 'Chronicle' attributed to Fredegarius.

Many scholars, Hodgkin in particular, had already realised that this Chronicle 'is ill informed and inaccurate.' But they did not draw the rational conclusion that the statements it contains about the Queen of the Franks should be looked upon with suspicion, especially when contradicted by Gregory of Tours.

It is now generally admitted that the so-called 'Chronicle of Fredegarius' is really the work of three writers and put together between 613 and 659. The first part is little more than a summary of what Gregory of Tours had written in his 'Historia Francorum,' and is therefore reliable. That the unknown author of the second part, wherein Brunhilda is represented as a monster of wickedness, was a political partisan of the Queen's enemies, and that his statements should be received with caution, is a thesis successfully established by Schnürer in an essay entitled 'Die Verfasser der Sogenannten Fredegar Chronik' ('Collectanea Friborgensia,' vol. ix.).

Modern historians have been led astray by the fact that it was in the nineteenth century fashionable to belittle Gregory of Tours, as did Henri Martin and even Ranke, and to prefer the text of the so-called Fredegarius. In spite of his credulity on the subject of miracles, Gregory was an intelligent observer and an impartial recorder of facts. He laid the foundations of French history.

The crucial point against Brunhilda made by Jonas, the first witness for the prosecution, is the story of her quarrel with St. Columbanus.

That the Queen was responsible for the immorality of her grandsons and that she encouraged them in the practice of evil is just what a disciple of St. Columbanus, indignant at the expulsion of the monks from Gaul, would have readily accepted as the whole truth. We have, unfortunately, no account of the quarrel written from the Queen's side; but the evidence as to her character provided by Gregory of Tours and by Gregory the Great makes the story of Jonas extremely improbable.[1] After all, she had brought up her son so well that she received a special letter of congratulation from the Pope; that she failed with her grandsons is more likely to have been her misfortune than her fault. (See Appendix III.)

Kurth's study of Queen Brunhilda was reprinted in 1919, along with several other valuable essays on Merovingian history, in two volumes, under the title 'Études Franques.' Kurth is the first historian who has given this unfortunate Queen a fair trial. His analysis of the documentary evidence proves conclusively that she was not guilty of the crimes of which she has been so persistently accused.

She was neither 'reckless' nor 'infamous.' Few kings or queens have equalled her wisdom, prudence, and nobility.

'Irreproachable in her private life; a friend of religion; humane in an inhuman century': such is the verdict of modern scholarship.[2]

Though not entirely blameless in a long life spent almost entirely among ferocious savages, Queen

[1] For a correct appreciation of Gregory as an historian consult Kurth, *Études Franques*, 'De l'autorité de Grégoire de Tours,' vol. ii. pp. 117–271.

[2] 'L'histoire lui rendra la justice de reconnaître qu'elle fut admirablement douée du côté de l'intelligence comme de celui de la volonté, irréprochable dans sa vie privée, amie de la religion, humaine dans un siècle sanguinaire, protectrice intelligente de toutes les initiatives civilisatrices' (*Études Franques*, vol. i. p. 348).

Brunhilda is one of the noblest and most pathetic figures of European history. Fallen at last into the hands of her enemies, an old woman of sixty years, subjected to every indignity which human bestiality could devise, paraded naked through the streets on the back of a camel, dragged naked along the ground by wild horses, she was finally burnt at the stake. After a thousand years her tomb was opened. A few charred bones, the fragment of a spur, bore witness to the cruelty of her fate.[1]

It is hard that her memory should still be stained by calumny invented as an explanation of barbarity which even in the eighth century seemed to call for some excuse.

The stories, which have so long disfigured our historical textbooks, magnifying St. Columbanus at the expense of Pope Gregory and the Frankish Queen, have been circulated by writers who were imperfectly acquainted with the sources for the history of Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries. History is still being taught, as it has so long been taught, by men who follow the beaten track and who are out of touch even with the literature of their own day on their own subject. Dr. MacEwen's ignorance of what Kurth had written in 1892 is proved by his reckless condemnation, in 1914, of Pope Gregory and Queen Brunhilda. This is ignorance for which, in a Professor of History, there is no decent excuse.

Every teacher and writer of history who makes without qualification or hesitation a serious charge against an historical personage, whether Pope, Queen, or peasant, without first making sure from a personal study of the evidence that he is right, and without

[1] The tomb was opened in 1632. Kurth gives an interesting account of this event taken from a little-known book, *Essai Historique sur l'Abbaye de Saint-Martin*, by G. Bulliot, Autun, 1849 (*Études Franques*, vol. i. p. 352).

making quite sure that there is nothing to be said in favour of the accused, or without saying anything favourable that can be said, offends against the etiquette of his profession, against justice, and must not be surprised if he is held guilty of having borne false witness.

CHAPTER IX

AN UNKNOWN WARRIOR

Art and Science in History—The Chain of Error unbroken—Lord Haldane on Truth in History—Lord Haldane recommends Michelet to the students of London University—The real position of Michelet as an historian—A poor French scholar, still unknown to the compilers, corrects the popular historians—Guizot and a text of Columbanus—Celebrity not an infallible test of historical greatness.

Although the circle of readers who have a critical appreciation of history is certainly widening, it does not yet include more than a very small proportion of the educated public. There are still so many people who continue to regard history as belonging solely to the region of Art, who regard indeed the Art of Writing History, like the Art of Cookery, as something intended in its highest development to stimulate a jaded palate.

That weary discussion, dear to the nineteenth century, as to whether history should be classified as an art or a science, still recurs from time to time in the reviews, perhaps because the terms are not defined and are not easy to define. These abstract notions, art and science, strike in different minds different notes. The words even in ordinary daily use cover a multitude of allied meanings.

Art is required always to make the reader take a real interest in what is written; for the work of an historian must be measured by the impressions made not on paper but on the minds of his readers. These anonymous partners have to be interested, amused, discreetly flattered, cautiously instructed, and, above all, protected from contact with the

ceaseless mechanical toil upon which armies of research are engaged. Here is the function of art in history: to turn records into a real story. To write a story, art is sufficient; but to write a true story, something more must be added.

In most of the historical work produced during the eighteenth and the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, form has obtained more attention than matter; a good literary style was often accepted as a sufficient substitute for scholarship.

Goldsmith wrote histories of Rome and Greece, and would have written just as readily upon China or Japan had there been any demand at the time for compilations on Oriental subjects.

In France, during the first half of the nineteenth century, historical scholarship was not only neglected but despised.

The solid school which had bred such men as Mabillon and Le Nain de Tillemont did not survive the Revolution. Its place was taken by the sentimentalists, Chateaubriand, Bonald, de Maistre and, later, Montalembert. This reaction was not confined to the Catholics. The work of Michelet, the brothers Thierry, Ampère, and many others of that circle, was built on slender foundations which have long ago collapsed.

At the present time in England a reaction from substance to form seems to be threatening the course of historical studies; such reaction was well under way just before the outbreak of the Great War.

On March 6, 1914, the Creighton Lecture to the University of London was delivered by the Right Hon. Viscount Haldane, K.T., F.R.S., who appeared as a defender of the speculative historians.

Professors and students were in that year both brought into contact with realities, and consequently

Lord Haldane's lecture, which was printed with the title 'The Meaning of Truth in History,' has not attracted the attention which the teaching of that eminent statesman deserves.[1]

Lord Haldane pleaded for art in history; he warned the students against spectacled artisans who labour ceaselessly among the documents; he opened up once again the old discussion as to how history should be written, and insisted upon the tremendous importance of artistic selection and presentation of the facts. The lecturer illustrated his thesis by saying that 'the historian must surely resemble the portrait painter rather than the photographer,' and he repeats that 'we do not want all the details'; that the true historian selects only such details as his picture requires; that the secret of such a writer as Gibbon seems to consist in his power to select details 'without sacrifice of integrity or accuracy.'

But surely this necessity of artistic selection, without which, as Lord Haldane remarks, 'history is a mockery,' must be regarded as subordinate to the greater urgency of making quite sure that the selection has been made from tested materials. If a painter uses colours that have been supplied by an untrustworthy tradesman, his picture will fade.

This is exactly what has happened to the historical work of Michelet, who, as Seignobos pointed out in his 'Introduction aux Études Historiques,' 'worked with materials he had not tested.'

Yet Michelet is selected by Lord Haldane as an example for the students of London University to follow; as a model for the world to admire: a model not merely of literary skill, but also of methodical scholarship; the ideal adjuster of art and science in history.

[1] *The Meaning of Truth in History*, University of London Press, 1914.

'We shall continue,' said Lord Haldane, 'to delight in Michelet and Macaulay and Carlyle, and to insist on regarding their books as among the world's most valuable records . . . *they have selected and refashioned the materials which through close research were first collected.*' [1]

Michelet has been put upon a pedestal of British manufacture and there he will remain; his admirers will insist upon admiring him and recommending him to the new generation. Yet nowhere outside Britain is Michelet honoured as an historian. His bluff has been called. 'No one,' wrote Hamel, 'has ever tortured witnesses and texts more obstinately or more artistically.'

His work was dominated, especially in his later years, by that noisy hatred of the Church with which so many Frenchmen have been obsessed.

'A travers l'histoire de la France il a vu passer des soutanes et des manteaux fleurdelisés et il s'est mis à ricaner, à hausser les épaules, à débiter des injures, des menaces, des suppositions ignominieuses.'

An avowed enemy of clericalism and royalty, he was bitter, unjust, and obstinate, intolerant of criticism and above correction. 'Instead of correcting his faults, we find him persisting in them and adding to them.' So wrote Robert Flint, the most intelligent Scottish critic of the nineteenth century.

Over and over again the statement has been made, and proved to the hilt, that Michelet painted his portraits with adulterated colours.[2]

The system which would make all historical work revolve round an idea is not suited to this imperfect world.

[1] p. 33.

[2] M. Henri Sée, who cannot be suspected of bias towards Michelet's pet enemies, in his article 'Michelet et l'Histoire-Résurrection' (*Mercure de France*, t. clxxxix. 1920, pp. 570–581), shows once more that Michelet was seldom in contact with the sources, that he relied too much on second-hand 'authorities' and on his own rhetorical genius.

When facts are to be selected or rejected with the object of illustrating the *leitmotiv* of a period, there is always a danger that the writer, having started with some decision of his own as to what that *leitmotiv* ought to be, will lose his sense of proportion in a struggle to make the facts fit.

It cannot often be safe to attempt by selection the artistic illustration of a period so that it may be seen at a glance by the lazy or hurried reader. For such selection must be made according to some design, and the result—interesting, restful, or exciting—will only be true when the materials used have been scientifically tested.

The danger to historical truth involved by this system of artistic selection has never been more clearly illustrated than it was by Michelet. That Lord Haldane should have proposed this writer as a model to the students of London University is a puzzle to which I cannot find the solution.

About seventy years ago there was published in France a critical analysis of Michelet's historical books, written by a poor French parish priest of whom few British historians have ever heard—Jean M. Sauveur Gorini.

In no English or Scottish historical work has the name of Gorini been printed; he is unknown to the Professors, the students, the critics of the nineteenth century. His name is not mentioned by Gooch in the only comprehensive book written in the English language on the subject of historiography.[1]

Working in solitude, in poverty, ignored by his ecclesiastical superiors, Gorini showed his contemporaries the hard road to historical truth. At a time when historians depended for their popularity upon a well-turned phrase or coloured paragraph,

[1] *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, 1913.

this half-starved parish priest showed that history, to be worthy of the name, demands labour compared with which stone-breaking is a recreation.

He spent his life, under conditions of incredible physical difficulty, in testing the materials out of which the popular historians of his day, Michelet, Thierry and others, were weaving their romantic stories.

He possessed two gifts of which Michelet knew nothing: a well-balanced critical faculty and a sense of humour.

J. M. Sauveur Gorini was born in France in 1803, and ordained priest in 1827. For two years he taught in a seminary at Meximieux. Blinkered ecclesiastics removed him from a post so well suited to his special talents and placed him in charge of one of the poorest and most remote parishes in Southern France, La Tranclière, in the Department of the Ain.

In this desolate wilderness, isolated from the intellectual world, miles from the nearest library, without a single sympathetic friend, Gorini lived for nearly twenty years, ill fed, ill clothed, his annual income £40, his dwelling-place a half-ruined hovel.

Yet under these appalling conditions he not only attended to his parochial duties but completed a work of historical research which for critical acumen and genuine scholarship was not surpassed by any writer in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century.[1]

There was no warm study with well-lined bookshelves in the miserable cottage at La Tranclière;

[1] 'L'abbé Gorini, dont on chercherait vainement le nom dans *La Nouvelle Biographie Générale* et dans le *Dictionnaire des contemporains*, doit être compté, personne ne l'ignore, parmi les plus remarquables érudits de notre siècle' (Tamizey de Larroque in *Revue des Questions Historiques*, t. 2, 1867, p. 342). 'I place your work in the first rank of historical production in the present century' (Letter from Montalembert to Gorini, quoted by Martin, *Vie de Gorini*, Paris, 1863, p. 213).

no comfortable armchair; no well-cooked dinners; no vintage wines in the cellar. Gorini enjoyed none of the advantages of University life. Even the provision of pens, ink, and writing-paper was a constant preoccupation.

During the winter months he worked in his kitchen in order to save fuel. His biographer, the Abbé Martin, has left a description of the conditions under which the work was done:

'Chairs, the table, and the whole floor, were encumbered with folios so that at times the room was almost inaccessible. In the cramped space of the little cottage lived, besides Gorini and his housekeeper, two nieces, whose education he had undertaken, and often his brother and sister-in-law. To see him calm and unperturbed amidst the stir of this ménage, one would have thought him quite content with such homely surroundings. . . . One of his nieces once asked, "Uncle, why is it you work so late into the night?" "My dear child, during the day there is so very much noise."'[1]

To those who know anything of the conversational methods of Southern France it must be clear that these were not conditions which facilitated literary work.

How Gorini obtained access to books is a problem which his biographer does not solve. A friendly bookseller in the distant town of Bourges allowed the poor scholar to take notes from between the uncut pages of books which he could not afford to buy and was unable to borrow.

To the priests of the neighbouring parishes he was, on account of his studious habits and solitary life, an object of disapproval and suspicion.

Recognition came after long years of misery in time to afford some small relief to a life almost worn out by privations of food and sleep. In 1847 he was moved to a larger parish with a presbytery that was

[1] *Défense de l'Église*, Paris, 1886 (10th ed.), pp. viii, ix.

at least weatherproof, nearer the town of Bourges, where he could get access to libraries.

Death in 1859 found Gorini famous.

The book which brought his name into public notice bore the cumbersome but descriptive title: 'Défense de l'Église contre les erreurs historiques de MM. Guizot, Aug. et Amédée Thierry, Michelet, Ampère, Quinet, Fauriel, Aimé Martin, etc.'

From such a title Victorian England would have turned with a smile of contempt, but in France it was at once realised that here was something on a higher level than sectarian controversy.

The Professors took alarm and began to correct their books. Ampère publicly admitted the value of Gorini's criticisms, and if he had lived would certainly have rewritten his 'Histoire Littéraire.' But unfortunately the third edition of this once popular work (edited by Daremberg after Ampère's death) contains only an insignificant number of corrections.

The mistranslations, misquotations, and errors of an elementary kind, which Gorini collected from Augustin Thierry's 'Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands,' can be counted not in scores but in hundreds. Thierry in reply showed a magnanimity rare in the records of controversy. He wrote to Gorini as follows:

'All the errors which I have made . . . will be corrected by me according to the dictates of my conscience as a historian. I wish to say to you, Sir, that I will make particular use of your book "Défense de l'Église." To your criticism I pay the most serious attention because, by your true scholarship and correct demeanour, they are very happily distinguished from the polemics carried on in the same cause by other people. I am astonished, Sir, that such an important work of research has been possible in a village presbytery far from the libraries and from contact with the world of scholarship.' [1]

[1] *Op. cit.* p. xxxvi (Paris, 1855).

On another occasion the distinguished historian wrote again, 'I am more and more surprised that such an undertaking as yours should have been carried out by you in a village.'

Thierry did as a matter of fact correct most of his mistakes in a later edition of his works, and both he and his brother Amédée died in the Catholic Faith, two interesting conversions of which no mention is made by Gooch in his chapter on the French historians of the nineteenth century.[1]

Gorini's criticisms provoked no ill feeling because they contained none. The solidity of his erudition, a rare phenomenon among historians of that date, combined with a natural gentleness and humility, disarmed his opponents. He could deal without malice an effective blow leaving his antagonist speechless. In conflict with the most mischievous mishandling of evidence he never allowed indignation to direct his comment. 'In the mouth of a critic,' he said, 'indignation is as pernicious as ignorance.' Gorini would never allow deliberate falsification as an explanation of even the most inexcusable misstatement.

'I have seen both in books and in real life so many worthy men fall into error and fall in such an incredibly stupid manner that I refuse to consider the inexactitudes of certain persons as due to deliberate falsehood. Are there not enough explanations besides this one to account sufficiently for the blundering of our feeble intellect? Even genius itself, however high it may tower above us, is still always near to the ground.'[2]

The four volumes of the 'Défense de l'Église' are constructed according to an unusual plan. First a short sketch is given of the historical setting to which the question at issue belongs; this is followed by a

[1] I am not sure whether Augustin Thierry ever formally became a Protestant.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. liv.

series of quotations from the works of popular historians with a comment on their methods and a correction of their inaccuracies; the criticism then closes with a summary of the facts based on the documents and accompanied by exhaustive, and often exhausting, extracts.

The work is, therefore, to a great extent constructive, and it contains a concise and accurate history of many famous men whose motives and actions have been so persistently misrepresented: Hilary of Arles, Sidonius Apollinaris, Avitus of Vienne, Gregory of Tours, and Hincmar of Rheims.

A large section of the second volume deals with the religious history of the Celts in Brittany and the British Isles. Here are pilloried among the chief offenders against historical truth, Michelet, Augustin Thierry, and Ampère; and Gorini also pointed out for the first time the slenderness of the foundations upon which Guizot built that attractive superstructure known as 'L'Histoire de la civilisation en France.'

Although the 'Défense de l'Église' has been often reprinted it never appealed to a wide circle of readers, partly because of the ill-chosen title, and partly on account of the tedious repetitions it contains. Such repetitions were inevitable because it was impossible to prove, as Gorini proved, that a whole school of historians has ignored or misrepresented the documents upon which their work was assumed to have been based, without giving fully, in each case under examination, both the alleged and the correct quotations.

In spite, however, of the inartistic mould in which his work was cast, Gorini showed that he could write vigorous French with that delicate irony which is peculiar to his nation. A typical illustration of the

severe chastisement he was able to inflict with polite and dignified restraint may be found in a note addressed to M. de Courson, who in 1846 published his 'Histoire des peuples bretons,' and therein copied, without any acknowledgment, from an article which the Abbé, while still in his hovel at La Tranclière, had written for a provincial review.

It must have been extremely irritating to Gorini to find that his own science, achieved with such laborious toil, was being appropriated by contemporaries who were too lazy to work themselves and not honest enough to confess their laziness to the reader.

However, M. de Courson received the punishment which such plagiarists deserve when he read the following footnote in Gorini's chapter on St. Columbanus:

'On St. Columbanus and the Bretons, whose history we are about to discuss, the "History of the Breton Peoples," by M. de Courson, may be usefully consulted. This third edition, crowned by the French Academy, contains a series of remarks, upon several modern writers, which very often, both in the thought expressed, and in the words actually used, follow closely what I have written myself upon the same subject. Must it be said that my Defence has taken the liberty to borrow in 1853, what could be read since 1846, in the "History of the Breton Peoples"? Not at all. For this part of my work had been published in 1844–45, at Lyons in a literary review, *L'Institut Catholique*. So it is M. de Courson who has honoured the fruits of my research with a place in his great work and has enabled them to take part in his academical triumph; and for this I, although merely an anonymous collaborator, thank him most sincerely. M. de Courson is by no means the only writer who has in this manner shown his approval of my work; but since, owing to the dates of our respective publications, there was some danger of my being taken for a plagiarist, I have thought it necessary to make this explanation in regard to the "History of the Bretons," without, however, intending any reproach

against the author whose erudition could construct pages of far greater interest than those of my own which he has borrowed.' [1]

Gorini's careful irony found another and a less reputable victim in the once notorious M. Libri, whose article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1842, provided him with an *argumentum ad hominem* of a kind which must be rare in the literature of dialectic.

This article was concerned with the alleged destruction of the Alexandrian library by Christians, an accusation which had been industriously circulated, chiefly but not solely, by disciples of Voltaire.

Libri was only adding his insignificant name to a list of people such as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Ampère, D'Israeli, etc., who had copied an untruthful piece of gossip from Gibbon. Christianity had been unjustly blamed on all sides for the destruction of this ancient library. Gorini pointed out that the error could be traced to Gibbon's misreading of a text of the historian Orosius. But the remarkable thing about this repetition of an ancient historical calumny in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was that M. Libri was silenced not only by Gorini but by the police.

'One can easily realise,' wrote the Abbé, 'with what bitter indignation M. Libri must be filled at the thought of the burning of the Alexandrian library. For he it is who knowing so well the value of ancient manuscripts and old editions, was able, when holding the post of Inspector of Public Libraries, to sell a number of such treasures to the value of three or four hundred thousand francs, and it was precisely at the very time when he was roused to fury by the alleged vandalism of the Christians that he condescended to remove from their restful obscurity our ancient bibliographical treasures. . . . The excessive passion of this illustrious bibliophile is indeed of ancient date . . . for several years ago he is reported to have stolen books from a library in Florence and consequently to have been refused admittance to the library at Milan.' [2]

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 183.

[2] *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 74.

M. Libri, although without any private means, became known throughout Europe as a collector of rare old books and manuscripts. When accused of stealing from the Bibliothèque Royale he fled to London. The 'Affaire Libri' subsequently attained political and international importance. Although Libri was condemned by the French courts, many people in England believed that he was innocent. His collection was sold in London and some of the books were purchased by the British Museum.[1]

Although the plan of Gorini's work involved much tedious quotation from tiresome medieval writers, he lightened his pages with unexpected touches of subtle humour, by which, even more than by his scholarship, he raised himself far above the common herd of clerical controversialists.

Ampère, in a chapter full of errors, attempted to show that the Papal supremacy only dated from Gregory the Great; after taking his antagonist over the ground, point by point, Gorini despatched him with a sharp thrust:

'M. Ampère has said that the end of the fifth century witnessed the birth of Gregory the Great. Now since that Pontiff was born about the year 540 the necessary conclusion follows that the fifth century must have been nearly half as long again as centuries usually are; and rightly so, if it be true, as our historian asserts, that such a century gave birth to the Papacy.'[2]

Ampère's 'Histoire littéraire de la France' was extensively utilised, about the middle of the nine-

[1] Janssen has the following observation on page 436 of the 13th volume of his *History of the German People* (Eng. tr.): 'Aventin's (†1534) charge against the monks, that through their fault "all the rare and precious old books had been lost," reads strangely against the unassailable fact that not a few of the most important documents were "missing" through his own fault.' When Aventin was appointed to the position of Court historian he took the opportunity of pillaging the libraries of convents and monasteries all over the country.

[2] *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 158.

teenth century, by English writers, whose habit of copying at second hand, without acknowledgment, is especially noticeable in the literature of Celtic history when the question of relations with the Papacy has to be determined. When scholars, reputed of the first rank, indulge in this practice, plagiarism is not likely to be suspected and they often escape detection.

Dr. Warren, a well-known liturgical scholar, one of the most respected Celtic Church historians of the last century, dealt at great length, in his preface to 'The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church,' with the Celts and the See of Rome. This is the most uncritical piece of writing to be found in any of his works and is not worth the space necessary to repeat the demonstration of its unhistorical character given by Loofs in 1882. One example of Warren's method may be quoted to illustrate the insularity of our nineteenth-century scholars. If this learned specialist had taken the trouble to read the books of the humble Abbé Gorini, he would have been spared the foolishness of copying mistranslations fifty years old. Warren represents St. Columbanus as writing to the Pope to lament 'the infamy attaching itself to the Chair of St. Peter in consequence of disputes at Rome' (p. 38).

This reference to papal 'infamy' is supposed to correspond with a paragraph in the letter of Columbanus to Boniface IV, which begins 'Doleo de infamia Cathedrae Petri.' Warren has translated not Columbanus but Ampère, who wrote in his 'History of French Literature' 'Colomban dit qu'il déplore l'infamie s'attachant à la chaire de S. Pierre' (vol. iii. p. 9).

Gorini pointed out that Ampère himself had not taken the text which he thus mistranslated from

Columbanus but from a part of the text as quoted by Mabillon. Ampère had not seen the letter of Columbanus and did not know the context which shows that the Irishman deplored the 'evil reports' in circulation about the Papacy, ('infamy' is obviously a mistranslation of 'infamia,') and that these reports were due, not as Warren, following Ampère, suggested, to the evil conduct of the Pope, but to the activities of enemies of the Roman See.

Warren, of course, had never heard of Gorini, but he might at least have been expected to notice that the editor of Ampère's 'Histoire littéraire de la France' warns the reader in a footnote—'the quotation given by M. Ampère does not give the true meaning of the words of St. Columbanus.'

It is possible that historians copy from each other in this way, not because they have, like Stokes, no time, but because they have certain established convictions which run the risk of disturbance by too close an investigation of original texts.

Of all the historians on Gorini's list, Michelet is the one who has gone furthest from the truth in Celtic history and whose errors have been most frequently copied by British historians. This inaccuracy of Michelet is very far from being, as his admirers declare, nothing more than the happy defect of a great genius, who, looking on the wide world of history, saw life 'steadily and saw it whole.'

Gorini hit the nail on the head when he said of these emotional anti-clerics 'none of them ever makes a mistake which brings credit to the Church.'

Lord Haldane may continue to 'delight in Michelet,' but he has no right to tell university students that this historian was a 'model of truthfulness and research' or that his work 'is among the world's most valuable records.' For no one can read, side

by side, Michelet and Gorini without admitting that the medieval Church, its institutions and notable representatives, have been consistently maligned, that the medieval texts have been in *hundreds* of instances mistranslated, or garbled, by the popular French historian.

If to garble or mistranslate is to be admitted as a form of artistic selection, then indeed does history become a mockery. More important as an indication of an historian's mentality is the quality rather than the quantity of his mistakes. Michelet made 'mistakes' of a kind which men only make when reason has been overwhelmed by passion. He was, at certain periods of his life, possessed with hatred of the Church as if by a devil; at such times he descended to treachery the gravity of which he no doubt failed to recognise.

Michelet's absurd libel of St. Columbanus and his monks is an example of the kind which can best be accounted for by temporary aberration.

On page 268, vol. i. of his 'Histoire de France,' [1] the Irish monks are described, with alleged chapter and verse in support, as men not only indulgent to offenders against the laws of chastity, but as men themselves so depraved that they often did not even know that such laws existed.

In proof of this astonishing assertion, Michelet quoted a sentence from the Rule of St. Columbanus, mistranslated it, and completely altered the original meaning by omitting the key-word of the whole passage. Such manipulation of a text, followed by strictures upon the laxity of the Columban rule, is not the work of a sane man. It is, of course, notorious that the defect of that rule was precisely its extreme severity.

[1] In Eng. tr., London, 1846, vol. i. p. 171.

The Irish monks were superior to the Gauls both in learning and in morality, and that they should be supposed ignorant of the elements of moral law is an absurdity that does not require demonstration. Yet within recent years an historian has been found (Willis-Bund : ' Celtic Church in Wales ') who accepts with alacrity both this proposition and its preposterous proof. (Michelet's libel on St. Columbanus, first pointed out by Gorini, was afterwards referred to in a footnote by Montalembert.[1] Consequently the name and work of Gorini should not have escaped the notice of lecturers, historians and historiographers.) The truth is that Michelet knew nothing about St. Columbanus, his rule, or his monks ; or indeed about monks of any kind, whether in the sixth or in the nineteenth century. Like Gibbon in a similar predicament he looked around for guides and, perhaps naturally enough, looked to Scotland. But trustworthy guides were as rare in that country in the nineteenth century as they were when Gibbon picked the Macphersons for the footnotes of the ' Decline and Fall.'

Michelet's choice fell on the Rev. Alexander Low, minister of Clatt (in Aberdeenshire), whose ' History of Scotland ' had been awarded a prize by the Highland Society of London.

Low's story is a pretty confusion. Here the French historian met and copied the popular version of ' primitive ' Culdees ; here also was a pleasing account of monks :

> ' The profligacy of some of the Continental monks,' wrote the minister of Clatt, ' threw a stigma upon the whole order . . . this profligacy and licentiousness, which is observable

[1] ' M. Gorini . . . and others have sufficiently exposed the absurd error committed by M. Michelet in his *Histoire de France* (tom. i. p. 268).'—*Monks of the West*, vol. ii. p. 450.

from the fifth to the seventh centuries, is said by the most eminent writers to have proceeded from the devotion which the monks paid to the Roman Pontiff.' ('History of Scotland,' p. 318.)

This reference to 'the most eminent writers' introduces the well-thumbed Mosheim, from whom Low, in common with most of his contemporaries, obtained his information about monasticism.

Mosheim, of course, knew little at first hand about monasteries, monks, or monastic history. He was merely echoing the sentiments of the Centuriators of Magdeburg. So that Michelet, painting the portrait of Celtic monks, 'selected and refashioned materials which through close research were first collected' as propaganda for the polemical wars of the sixteenth century.

It is probable that Michelet had never been inside a monastery. It is certain that the minister of Clatt had never seen or spoken to a monk in all his life.

When the students of London University learn from Michelet that monks were as surely licentious as kings were tyrannical, how nearly do they approach to Truth in History ?

Most of the mistakes which Gorini collected from the works of the popular French historians were not what can be called 'merely' errors of detail due to carelessness or inaccuracy or to a defective memory. He did not spend a life of toil among the documents in order to prove that historians, being human, are liable to err. His object was to show that the historians did not study the evidence upon which their confident judgments were supposed to be founded. Guizot, in a chapter of his 'History of Civilisation,' undertook to prove the superiority of Celtic over Roman Christianity in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Whatever may be the value of the suggestion that the Celts were better men than the Latins, the particular proof of this assertion, as put forward by Guizot, was so thoroughly shattered by Gorini that no reply of any kind is possible.

Guizot built his proof upon a comparison of the homilies of St. Columbanus with those written a century earlier by the famous preacher Caesarius of Arles. The sermons of Caesarius are spoken of as exemplifying the alleged Latin tendency to neglect true religion in favour of purely formal monasticism. The sermons of Columbanus, on the other hand, declare war 'against every vain accommodation and hypocrisy . . . he (Columbanus) attacks the pretence of monasticism.' [1]

Then comes the proof: the quotation of a long extract from a sermon attributed to Columbanus wherein are a number of admirable remarks upon the uselessness of fasting and vigils when unaccompanied by moral regeneration.

Guizot did not notice, did not mention the fact, that in the text immediately preceding these remarks Columbanus says that he has borrowed the words in question from Faustus, supposed to be a teacher in his Irish monastery. So that the quotation seems to hold good, not only for the personal sentiments of St. Columbanus but for the teaching of Irish monks as a body. 'Here,' wrote Guizot, 'is a clear proof of the superior morality of the Celts, their hatred of hypocrisy, and their detestation of formalism.' How very different are supposed to be these truly Christian sentiments from the superficial morality of the 'Roman' preacher Caesarius! (This same Caesarius had long ago been produced by Mosheim as a witness to the assertion that in the fifth century Latin

[1] *Hist. de la civilisation en France*, 16th Lecture, vol. ii. p. 23.

religion consisted 'in certain external virtues and badges of piety.')

Gorini made short work of all this theorising. 'It is a singular thing,' he observed, 'that the fragment quoted by M. Guizot, which Columbanus extracted from the writings of his master Faustus, had been in the first place taken by Faustus from the homilies of St. Caesarius.'[1] So that the text used by Guizot to prove that the Celts were better moralists than the Latins really proves that the teaching of both parties was identical.

The incident is valuable as an example of the risk run by popular historians who, if they sometimes read the texts, seldom make them a subject of critical study.

The blunder made by the famous French historian was repeated in a slightly grosser form by Professor G. T. Stokes, who wrote in the 'Expositor'[2] that in the homilies of Columbanus 'there is not a word a modern Calvinist might not utter.' Thus the Irishman was a witness for 'Celtic independence of Papal Jurisdiction whom no casuistry can explain away.' This Professor would have been better employed in studying his text than in speculating on the utterances of a modern Calvinist.

Seebass has shown that the quotation from Faustus is not taken, as Gorini suggests, from a monk of that name at Bangor, but from Faustus of Reiz (405–490), Abbot of Lérins. It seems, therefore, that Caesarius of Arles (471–543), educated at Lérins, had copied the passage in question from Faustus. In any case the sermon quoted by Guizot was probably not written by Columbanus but belonged to the common stock of preaching material in current use during the sixth century.

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 159–160.

[2] Vol. x. 3rd series, p. 149.

The error of Guizot cannot be regarded as unimportant, or as concerned merely with unnecessary detail, or as neglect, justifiable on artistic grounds, of some unessential item. It is a mistake of the kind that distorts the whole framework of history.

But it is most distinctly the kind of mistake made so frequently by that school of historians recommended by Lord Haldane to the students of London University. And it is clearly a result of setting out to write history round a preconceived idea.

Guizot had been educated to believe in the existence of a 'Celtic Church' primitive, purer in doctrine and morality than the 'Latin' Church.

He read the sermon erroneously attributed to the Celtic Columbanus and found therein, as he expected, principles of sound morality which prejudice would not allow him to find in the sermons of the 'Latin' Caesarius.

From the verdict of the popular French historian there was, practically speaking, no appeal. His statements were accepted as true by the mass of teachers and students of history. During the past fifty years possibly about 100,000 people in Great Britain have read Guizot's 'History of Civilisation'; of that number not one per cent., not one thousand students read also the sermons of Caesarius; not one-half per cent. ever heard of Gorini.

Although Guizot, in many a striking passage, protested against much of the fiction which in his own day was still regarded as history, his dislike of the Papacy distorted many of his judgments. He looked upon the Papacy as, in principle, the enemy of science and liberty and, therefore, the enemy of Christianity. But he realised, and made his readers realise, that the Popes had provided for centuries the

only home of such science as there was, of such art as there was, of such liberty as there was.

The French historian continued, however, (so peculiar is the action of inherited prejudice,) to see in that institutional unity of Christendom, which alone accounts for the survival and development of the medieval Church, the fundamental characteristic of its alleged evil tendency.

Guizot, and others of his school, continued to hold responsible for all the scandals of Christendom the Popes without whom there would by this time have been no Christendom left.

Gorini showed that, whether or not these writers were correct in their views, the proofs which they adduced were entirely illusory.

The task of exposing their uncritical historical method was difficult and tiresome owing to the mass of erroneous detail which they had produced, often copied from previous compilers, often without any reference, often with a wrong reference and a garbled or incorrect quotation. Moreover, the constant suggestion of evil motive, introduced sometimes with a single word, required months of research and pages of dull quotations in order that the truth could be established and set before the reader.

These popular French historians who were seldom acquainted at first hand with the texts upon which many of their conclusions were supposed to be founded, who wrote with a flagrant disregard of the laws of evidence which alone make possible any sort of certitude in history, declared that they alone enjoyed the untrammelled use of reason.

To this pretension Gorini opposed a practical demonstration of a sound historical method; an exercise in the detection of fallacy; a model of the true art of controversy. These were lessons badly

needed by English students during the nineteenth century and after, to so many of whom such institutions as the Papacy and monasticism, which alone make a connected story of European polity and scholarship, were only known at second hand.

By the people of England and Scotland these institutions were looked upon as relics of a disgraceful past, not as living forces with a unity, with a plan, with an unbroken continuity of live tradition. Historical textbooks, encyclopedias, novels, the press, the whole machinery of written testimony, had long been used to maintain and extend such baseless opinions throughout the country.

Most of the historical errors of MM. Guizot, Augustin and Amédée Thierry, Ampère, Quinet, Fauriel, Michelet, and Aimé Martin, were repeated in the English textbooks, and the names of these French writers were placed as credible witnesses in the footnotes.

And only a few years ago the students of London University were told, not the story of the starving Curé of La Tranclière, not the honest record of Augustin Thierry, the historian who was not ashamed to recognise and correct his mistakes ; they were told to admire and to imitate the historical work, not merely the artistic talent, of a conceited Frenchman, who, when corrected, lost his temper like a spoilt child.

Let these two men, Michelet and Gorini, be judged, not as purveyors of entertainment, but as providers of the ' world's most valuable records.'

A business this last which may be dull or may be full of life and interest, but where most credit must always be given for veracity, ability to weigh evidence, and first-hand familiarity with the documentary sources.

Michelet, the greatest French prose writer of his time, with a dramatic sense, an instinct for stagecraft, with command of the shadows and lights, relief, perspective, colour, was like Gibbon a great organiser, a great commander of ideas—a great film producer. The business of Gorini was with records and with evidence. His temperament calm and judicial, his astounding perseverance under intolerable handicaps, his patient and humble scholarship, were attributes which at other times and in other places would have gained him a corner in the temple of Clio. But on the world's honours list his name will not be found.

Yet who can deny that without such men as Gorini history would soon degenerate into the deceptive appearance of reality produced every day by the artists at Hollywood ? [1]

[1] An account of the life of Abbé Gorini, with a generous appreciation of his work, is given by Dom H. Leclercq in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, Paris, 1924 (art. 'Gorini'), who supplies the following bibliography: Alloin (L.), *L'Abbé Gorini* (1803–1859) *et la Société d'histoire ecclésiastique et d'archéologie religieuse*, dans *Bulletin de la Société Gorini, Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique et d'archéologie religieuse du diocèse de Belley*, 1904, t. i. pp. 15–22. *Gorini et Quinet*, dans même revue, 1904, t. i. pp. 29–101, 333–345. G. Gandy, *M. l'Abbé Gorini*, dans *Écho du Mont-Blanc*, Chambéry, 1854. Hébrard (Cl.), *Notice bibliographique sur l'Abbé J. M. S. Gorini*, dans *Défense de l'Église*, 3e éd. t. i. pp. xxxiii–lxiv. Fr. Martin, *Vie de M. Gorini, curé de La Tranclière et de Saint Denis, Auteur de la 'Défense de l'Église,'* Paris, 1863. J. M. Villefranche, *Abbé Gorini*, dans *Biographies du xixe siècle*, Paris, s.d. [1895], pp. 299–322.

CHAPTER X

'SPIRIT, METHOD, AND AIMS'

Dr. Hume Brown and a *History of Scotland for Schools*—Heinrich Zimmer on difference between the religion of Celts and Latins—Formalism and Forgery—The Isle of Saints—and forgers—Aldhelm and Columbanus —Milman and Mosheim again.

ALMOST the sole justification for work which has some resemblance to the easy pastime of setting up puppets for the pleasure of knocking them down again is the fact that my puppets do not stand upon their own feet, but are, so to speak, tied together. And the chain which united them and keeps them together, the identity of motive, unites them also with the history being taught in many places at the present day. For historians of good repute still repeat the outworn dialectic, still borrow their quotations at second hand, still 'take on trust what they deliver to the public.'

Even the name of Michelet is still offered, in circles reputed learned, as an authority on the religious history of the Celts.

Dr. Spence Jones, Dean of Gloucester, delivered a lecture entitled 'The Celtic Church, a Tragedy in History,' to the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion, who published it in their Transactions for the Session 1913–14. The lecture is on the lines usually followed by the puppets, and I am here only interested in one passage: 'Michelet the French historian . . . openly charges Rome with having suppressed most of the writings of Columbanus as writings of an enemy' (p. 71).

This amiable suggestion appeared in 'Biographia Britannica Literaria' of Thomas Wright, London, 1842, as an historical fact with a reference to Michelet as the 'authority.'[1]

If Dr. Spence Jones knows little about St. Columbanus, it is certain that Michelet knew even less, and that if the great French historian had ever read the text of the Columban correspondence he would probably have accused 'Rome,' not of suppressing the letters which have perished, but of forging those which have survived.

There can be no doubt that the puppets I have set up and knocked down (no new experience for many of them) are still credited in Britain, perhaps by a majority of the educated, with a solidity they have never possessed. And although a few of them, once knocked over, have never recovered their balance, there are veterans still to be seen standing in the line of battle flourishing their rusty weapons and shouting the old war cries. Moreover, the place of the fallen is quickly occupied by new combatants. And so the line is held for the time being; undermined at all the salient points; unsupported by any real force of scholarship. How is that line being held in Scotland at the present day? In reviewing the attitude taken up by modern Scottish historians on this question of the early Church in Scotland I intend, owing to limitations of time and space and patience, to examine the work of two writers only: both well known to the Scottish public and highly spoken of by contemporary scholars—Dr. Hume Brown, late Historiographer Royal for Scot-

[1] The reference is to *Histoire de France*, tom. i. p. 267: 'The Church of Rome was strongly interested in suppressing the writings of an enemy who had, nevertheless, left in the memory of the nations so great a reputation for sanctity. Thus the greater part of St. Colomban's books have perished.'

land, and Dr. MacEwen, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at New College, Edinburgh.

'Dr. Hume Brown has Hill Burton's calm, fair, judicious way of looking at things.' So wrote Dr. Hay Fleming in 'The Bookman' (April, 1899).[1] These Scots pay each other curious compliments.

I venture to assert that, dealing only with the question of Hume Brown's method of handling the early history of Scotland, the inquirer gets gradually nearer to the conviction that Hume Brown has inherited Hill Burton's way of *not looking* at things.

The late Historiographer Royal made no attempt to draw public attention to current errors on the subject of early Scottish Church history. On the contrary, in 'A History of Scotland for Schools,' a book used at the present time in the public schools all over Scotland, on an occasion when clear statement is more than ever urgent, his language is not only inexact but equivocal. And he has thus lent to false history the support of his authoritative position.

Dr. Hume Brown has written about the history of religion in Celtic times with an ambiguity for which I can think of no decent excuse.

'There is one thing more that has to be mentioned, and it is very important. At the time of which we are speaking, there were two Christian Churches in the West of Europe. There was the Irish Church, of which we have heard so much, and to which St. Columba and St. Aidan belonged; and there was the Roman Church, of which the Pope or bishop of Rome was the head. The Irish Church was different in some things from the Church of Rome. It had nothing to do with the Pope. . . .

'Now the question came to be, which of the two Churches was to have the upper hand in Britain and Ireland. The Roman Church was far stronger than the Irish, because many

[1] D. Hay Fleming, *Critical Reviews relating chiefly to Scotland* (London, 1912), p. 4.

countries on the continent, such as Italy, France, and Germany, belonged to it, as well as a large part of England.' [1]

To Scottish children and most of their teachers these words can convey only one meaning. Here they will find, as no doubt they expect to find, confirmation of the old theory of a continuity between the modern Kirks and that phantom Church in the West of Europe which 'had nothing to do with the Pope.' [2]

This result has been achieved by means of an expedient known to dialecticians as the argument 'ex homonymia.' 'This dialectical move,' wrote Schopenhauer, 'is nearly always used unconsciously and is especially liable to mislead when conceptions which are covered by the same words are related and inclined to be interchangeable.' [3]

What meaning did Dr. Hume Brown intend to give to the word 'Church' in the above-quoted passage?

He certainly could not have had in mind the definition set forth by the House of Lords in the course of the Free Church case:

'The identity of a religious body described as a Church consists in the unity of its doctrine.'

In this meaning of the word there was in sixth-century Europe only one Church. That there were 'two Christian Churches in the West of Europe' is only partly true in a geographical sense. Only partly true because in this sense there were several Churches

[1] P. Hume Brown, M.A., LL.D., Fraser Professor of Ancient (Scottish) History and Palaeography, University of Edinburgh, *A History of Scotland for Schools* (Oliver and Boyd, Edin. 1907), Part I. p. 35.

[2] A similar statement may be seen in Green's *Short History of the English People*, vol. i. p. 42 (ed. 1892). 'On the one side lay Italy, Spain, and Gaul, whose churches owned obedience to the See of Rome, on the other the Church of Ireland.'

[3] A. Schopenhauer, *The Art of Controversy*, p. 18. (Tr. T. Bailey Saunders, London, 1896.)

in the West of Europe: the French, Italian, German and Irish Churches.

It is probable that the pupils and teachers who use Dr. Hume Brown's book in the schools of Scotland will not understand this.

They will accept the suggestion that the 'Irish Church,' incorrectly described as 'having nothing to do with the Pope,' was different from the Church 'to which so many countries on the Continent belonged' in the same sense as the Scottish Established Church and the Free Churches are different from the 'Continental Church' at the present time.

Dr. Hume Brown has given a new lease of life to an expiring error, and the passage I have quoted from his 'History of Scotland for Schools' has an unfortunate appearance of having been constructed for that purpose.

On this question of the Papacy and the early Church in Scotland, the present attitude of modern Scottish historians, and of Hume Brown himself when not writing for children, is substantially as follows: there was no essential difference between the creeds but there was a very great and very important spiritual difference between the ideals of the Scots in early times and the ideals of Continental Christians.

The fundamental difference, wrote Hume Brown, in his 'History of Scotland,'[1] was one of 'spirit, method and aims.'

This difference is of course understood to be more significant than any mere outward agreement on matters of discipline or dogma.

That the religion of the Celts differed completely from that of the Latins in the things that matter most, in outlook, in spiritual mentality, etc., etc., is, of course, an assertion difficult to prove at this

[1] Vol. i. p. 23 (Cambridge, 1902).

long distance of time. I do not intend to discuss whether or not there may be some element of truth in the hypothesis, so pleasing to the national vanity of the Scots, that even their primitive and semi-barbarous ancestors were even then as now morally and ethically far above the always degenerate Latins.

What I wish to point out is that modern Scottish historians make this assertion; but they do not attempt to provide any proof.

I intend to ignore the distinguished company of writers who have followed the lead of Hume Brown on this question (*e.g.* the Rev. Archibald Stott, D.D., who has devoted considerable space to the pleasant thesis of Celtic (Pictish) superiority in his 'History of the Pictish Church'), and I will deal at once with the scholar who first formulated the theory and at the same time endeavoured to support it with historical proofs. The statement that the 'Celtic Church' differed fundamentally from the 'Roman Church' in the things of the spirit, which matter most, was first put forward by Heinrich Zimmer, Professor of Celtic in Berlin University.[1]

Zimmer was a great philologist and perhaps the best Celtic scholar of his day. But the question here at issue is not one requiring technical knowledge; it can be judged efficiently by anyone who is acquainted with the elementary principles of reasoning on which evidence should be examined.

Scottish historians have taken, as I have said, a suggestion from Zimmer, but none of them, not even Dr. Hume Brown, has said anything about the proof. It will not be difficult to show that the arguments upon which Zimmer based his assertion that the 'Celtic Church' differed from the 'Roman

[1] Art. in *Real-Encyklop. für prot. Theol. und Kirche*, vol. x. Trans. A. Meyer. *The Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland*, London, 1902.

Church' in all the things that really matter, that is 'in spirit, method and aims,' cannot stand for a moment the test of analysis.

In the article written for the 'Real-Encyklopädie' Zimmer rejected the old theories of an anti-Papal Irish Church:

> 'It is an indisputable fact that in dogma the Celto-Irish Church, nay the whole Celtic Church at the end of the sixth century, shows no difference from the Western Catholic Church of the fourth century and differed but slightly from the Roman Catholic Church of the seventh century.' [1]

To this statement he adds, perhaps as a paregoric for his readers, that the Celts were really after all very different from the Romans since they were fundamentally apart in spirit, method and aims.

It should be noticed that Zimmer made quite clear that he had in mind something more than a racial difference between Celts and Latins:

> 'The spirit which animated the Celtic clerics of the sixth century differed greatly from that of the representatives of the Roman Church and of those of the Celtic Church whom they converted' (p. 115).

Zimmer based these conclusions upon a lengthy argument. And as so many Scottish historians have accepted the conclusions but omitted to say anything about the proof, it will be useful here to supply the deficiency and to see what Zimmer's argument may be worth.

To prove this thesis Zimmer laid stress on four points of alleged difference; he states that the Romans but not the Celts taught or encouraged:

(1) *Intolerance.*—'First of all we are struck with the spirit of intolerance towards differing views' (p. 115).

[1] *The Celtic Church*, p. 129.

(2) *Lying and Forgery.*—'The Irish of the sixth and seventh centuries . . . never consciously deviate from the path of truth. This trait, the spirit of *deliberate* falsification in the interests of the Church, only appears in the Irish Church after her union with that of Rome' (p. 117).

(3) *Formalism.*—'On the one side we find a striving for individual freedom and personal Christianity, on the other a bigoted zeal for rigid uniformity and systematising' (p. 130).

(4) *Cultus of Relics.*—Zimmer asserts that the Celts paid no devotion to relics (p. 119).

I intend to deal with each of these four points, not with the object of proving that the accusation they involve against the religion of sixth-century Europe is unjustified, but to show that the logic of Zimmer is at fault.

It is necessary to emphasise the fact that these statements made by Zimmer are two-edged; in order to make them effective the German scholar must prove his case affirmatively against the Romans and negatively in favour of the Celts.

The first point: Intolerance of Romans: Tolerance of Celts.

The principal witness brought by Zimmer to prove the intolerance of the Romans is St. Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmsbury (640–709):

'we are struck with the spirit of *intolerance* towards differing views and consequently by the spirit of *uncharitableness*, as shown by . . Aldhelm in his letter to Geruntius' (p. 116).

The letter in question was written by Aldhelm to Geruntius, leader of the Britons in the south-west of England, in order to try to obtain uniformity in regard to observance of Easter and to prevent

a possible schism. Bede says that the letter was well received and achieved its object.

The gentleness and tact of the writer are witnessed both by the text of his letter and the fact that its immediate effect was peace.

Aldhelm wrote this letter to safeguard the unity of the Church; there is no dispute about this fact. But Zimmer says that this action is evidence of a 'spirit of intolerance . . . a spirit of uncharitableness.' What did Zimmer mean?

What did St. Paul mean when he wrote 'I beseech you that you walk . . . supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph. 4); or St. Cyprian, 'Think not that you thus maintain Christ's Gospel as long as you separate yourselves from Christ's flock and from His peace and concord'; or St. Augustine, who, after quoting St. Paul, wrote these words: 'We have therefore to inquire who has charity; you will find it in those alone who love unity'?

It is clear either that the ecclesiastical meaning of the word 'charity' has in modern times become reversed, or that Zimmer, in describing St. Aldhelm's action to safeguard unity as an instance of 'uncharitableness,' has against him not only the Fathers but also St. Paul.

St. Aldhelm's zeal for unity may be allowed to Zimmer as a mark of the Romans in the sixth century. What about the Celts? Zimmer said that

> 'the Irish on the other hand such as Columbanus on the Continent and the Irish in Northumberland (*e.g.* Colman) only demanded to be allowed to practise Christianity quietly.'

Here is a surprising assertion. For the Irish on the Continent and in Northumberland only demanded to be allowed to follow not 'Christianity quietly' but their own national customs in observing the date

of Easter and the manner of the tonsure. Columbanus wrote to the Pope a not at all tolerant letter in which he expressed a most unreasonable desire to enforce his own observance of Easter upon the whole of Gaul.

And of course the Irish in Northumberland owing to their different observance of Easter were an intolerable nuisance to everybody; they were unmolested during the lifetime of St. Aidan out of respect for his gentleness and sanctity.

Unity of observance regarding the date of Easter was essential to the religious, social, and commercial convenience of the nation. There was no more 'intolerance' in the decision of the Conference of Whitby than there is to-day in the official synchronisation of clocks to Greenwich time.

There is no perceptible difference between the Celts and the Latins of the sixth century in their appreciation of the importance of safeguarding the unity of Christendom. This zeal for unity, whether it be regarded as a mark of charity or of intolerance, was characteristic of both parties.

Indeed if there is any difference between Aldhelm and Columbanus the latter must be accounted the less tactful, and the less tolerant, of the two ecclesiastics.

Zimmer's second point: the encouragement of falsehood and forgery by the Romans but not by the Celts.

'The Irish never deviate consciously from the path of truth; this trait, this spirit of deliberate falsification of documents in the interests of the Church only appears in the Irish Church after her union with that of Rome.' [1]

[1] This misuse of the word 'union' is almost universal in the literature of early Scottish Church history. Less objectionable, but still inaccurate and ambiguous, is the phrase discovered by Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith, 'the union of the Celtic and Roman mission-fields.' *Anglo-Catholicism*, London, 1925, p. 4.

Historians, if only for their own sakes, should always impute the most creditable motive to the mistakes of other people and refuse, unless the evidence is clear as crystal, to admit that a deception, however gross it may appear, is due to deliberate lying. The historian seldom dwells in a house of such assured solidity that he can throw stones at strangers without risk to his own property. This charge of deliberate falsification brought by Zimmer against the whole body of ecclesiastics in the sixth century, the Celts alone excepted, might plausibly but unjustly be used as an explanation of his own attempt to prove that the historical St. Patrick was a myth.

'The accepted story,' he wrote, 'is based on a pious delusion, or more probably on deliberate "invention," "fabrication" or "forgery"' (pp. 117–118). But it is now admitted by most scholars that Zimmer, in denying the historicity of St. Patrick, went much further than the limits of sound historical criticism.

Shall anyone venture to say that Zimmer deviated consciously from the path of truth, that he was guilty of deliberate fraud or pious delusion? The absurdity of any such suggestion is at once obvious. But even if Zimmer had been right in attributing the commonly received story of St. Patrick to forgery and fraud of ecclesiastics writing in the supposed interests of their Church, rather than to a defective critical faculty, his argument would still be incomplete.

For if the Church of Rome is to be blamed for the historical shortcomings of ecclesiastics in the ninth century, then it might be said that the mistakes of many modern Scottish historians should be attributed to the influence of the General Assemblies.

Finally, if Zimmer is right after all and the history of St. Patrick is a deception foisted upon a credulous

world by cunning Popes or their agents, even then his whole point is not proved, for his point is that the Romans encouraged deliberate lying, but the Celts did not 'ever consciously deviate from the path of truth.'

If Zimmer was right in alleging the history of St. Patrick as an example of Latin lying in the interests of the Church, a charge of lying in Irish interests, a charge very difficult to rebut, can be brought against the Celts.

There is the little affair of the Canon of Anatolius, appealed to by the Celts at the Conference of Whitby, and previously also by St. Columbanus, when defending their cherished observance of Easter.

Anatolius was a bishop of Laodicea in the third century; the Canon attributed to him by the Celts at Whitby is a forgery fabricated in the sixth century. Mr. Turner, in *English Hist. Rev.* 1895, suggests that it was probably forged in Scotland:

'The probabilities are in favour of a northern origin for pseudo-Anatolius, and of all possible localities I am not sure that Iona is not the most likely' (vol. 10, p. 709).

Might not this Canon of Anatolius be brought forward as an instance of deliberate falsification practised by the Celts in the interests of their own observance?

Mr. Robert Steele (following Bruno Krusch, 'Studien,' p. 337) points out in his introduction to 'Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi, Fasc. VI. Compotus Fratris Rogeri' (Oxford, 1926), that the Easter discussions produced a considerable crop of forgeries, most of which originated from the Isle of Saints.

'Thus the prologue of St. Cyril . . . is a Spanish forgery; the Acts of the Council of Caesarea . . . is an Irish forgery of about 505 A.D.; Athanasius "De Ratione Paschali" . . .

is an Irish forgery of about 546 A.D.; Anatolius, "De Ratione Paschali" . . . is an Irish forgery of about 556 A.D.; the epistle of Cyril . . . is an Irish forgery of about 607 A.D.' (p. xiii).

Zimmer's second point fails, both negatively and positively, chiefly because of his assumption that writers in early times, whether Romans or Celts, can be judged fairly by the standards of modern historical morality.

Zimmer's first two arguments, that the Latins were intolerant and that they were conscious liars, and that they corrupted the Celts, involve a contradiction with the facts.

Zimmer's third point: Formalism:

'The Celt emphasises a Christianity pervading life and deeds, while with the Roman Catholics the observance of a formal Christianity is the chief and foremost aim as Aldhelm so frankly proclaims' (p. 130).

For generations the popular historians in England and Scotland have taught that before the Reformation religion had for centuries been little more than an outward show, that a machine-like uniformity of drill had been the chief object of Christian endeavour during the greater part of a thousand years, during which time it was supposed that a man could always be sure of saving his soul if he had followed the drill correctly.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this charge of formalism against the medieval Church was often made by distinguished historians on the authority of such compilers as Mosheim and often in terms of ludicrous exaggeration.

There is a passage in Milman's 'Latin Christianity,' until recently widely accepted as a safe guide for students,[1] where the full significance of formalism

[1] *E.g.* by Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, Oxford, 1885, vol. iv. c. iv. p. 83.

is vigorously expressed. In his preface to this book the author writes that he 'does not wish to be suspected of want of gratitude for the aid of Mosheim.' Milman has certainly surpassed his master in the art of picturesque invective. Latin Christianity, he wrote,

'has become Paganism with Christian images, symbols, and terms; it has . . . altogether set itself above and apart from Christian, from universal morality, and made what are called works of faith the whole of religion; the religion of the murderer, who, if while he sheathes his dagger in the heart of his victim, he does homage to an image of the Virgin, is still religious; the religion of the tyrant who, if he retires in Lent to sackcloth and ashes, may live the rest of the year in promiscuous concubinage and slaughter his subjects by thousands.'[1]

Milman's rhetoric is a natural development of Mosheim's concise description of sixth-century Christianity as little more than an interest taken in dead bodies and bones. It is well to notice that the contrast alleged by Zimmer to have existed between the Celts and the Romans in regard to this matter of formalism was discovered by Mosheim to have existed between the primitive and later Christians. 'Members of the early Church,' wrote Mosheim, 'were studious to maintain a holy simplicity, . . .' while the later Christians 'placed the substance of religion in external rites and bodily exercises.'

In proof of this assertion, Mosheim produced (1) his dishonest quotation from St. Eligius; (2) the sermons of Caesarius, and was followed, as I have shown above, by so well-known an historian as Guizot; (3) the writings of St. Aldhelm; and has been followed by Zimmer.

And here I come to the real point of my quarrel with the German scholar. The question to be

[1] Vol. vi. p. 632.

answered is whether Zimmer has correctly reported Aldhelm as 'frankly proclaiming' a purely formal Christianity.

The answer can be given in a few words.

There is nowhere in Aldhelm's epistle to Geruntius a proclamation, either frank or concealed, of anything that can be correctly described as formal Christianity.

I do not know what particular phrase of Aldhelm's Zimmer had in mind, as he gives merely a general reference; I can only suggest that he must have been thinking of the following paragraph; there is nothing else in the letter even remotely connected with the question of outward observances:

'Faith without good works is dead; without doubt the Catholic Faith and the concord of fraternal charity inseparably follow the same road as is witnessed to by that noble preacher and vessel of election in such manner: "If I should know all prophecy and all mysteries, if I should have faith that can remove mountains . . . but have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" . . . and to conclude with my whole meaning in a single phrase . . . in vain do they take to themselves credit for the Catholic Faith who do not follow the rule and doctrine of St. Peter.'[1]

There is nothing here that can be properly described as a frank proclamation of formalism.

When St. Aldhelm was dealing specifically with religious instruction he was careful to point out the danger of laying too much stress upon outward observances. To his pupil Ethelwald he wrote, warning him against 'that vain parade which is so hateful to God . . . rather devote your whole time to reading of Scripture and to holy prayer.'[2]

St. Aldhelm also protested against the habit of

[1] 'Et ut brevis sententiae claustello cuncta concludantur, frustra de fide Catholica inaniter gloriatur, qui dogma et regulam Sancti Petri non sectatur.' Aldh. Ep. ad Geruntium, *Aldhelmi Opera* (ed. J. A. Giles, Oxford, 1844, p. 89).

[2] Aldh. Ep. ad Ethelwaldum, *op. cit.* p. 332.

rash criticism, prevalent even in his own day, and prayed that his writings might be protected from 'malicious critics who nibble at books like goats at the stem of the vine.'[1] Zimmer is not the only goat in St. Aldhelm's vineyard; Mosheim had already had a nibble, and there are many others.

St. Aldhelm cannot be allowed to Zimmer as a witness that the Romans encouraged the practice of a merely outward appearance of religion.

But even if adherence to Christian unity and to the principle that Faith without works is dead be regarded as leading inevitably to formalism in religion, still the argument of Zimmer would not be complete, for recognition of the importance of unity was also frankly proclaimed by the Celts, *e.g.* by St. Columbanus, who wrote to the Pope:

> 'The King asks you, the Queen and all implore you, that as soon as possible unity may come . . . that henceforth the whole flock of Christ may be one.'

A great deal of the correspondence of Columbanus, wrote O. Seebass, 'shows a tendency to formalism and legality.'[2]

And it must not be forgotten that the Celts, with their obstinate adherence to their own Easter tradition and to some particular mode of the tonsure, might well be accused of an excessive and unreasonable regard for the outward observance of religious formulae.

Zimmer fails with his third point that the Latins encouraged an outward show of religion while the Celts alone were truly spiritual. His argument is

[1] Aldhelm, *De Laude Virginum*, quoted by Ebert in *Histoire Générale de la Littérature du Moyen Age* (tr. from German), Paris, 1883, vol. i. p. 660.

[2] *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclop. of Religious Knowledge*, N.Y. and London, 1909, vol. iii. p. 167.

not much more than an echo of sixteenth-century polemics.

Zimmer's fourth point: That relics were venerated by the Latins but not by the Celts.

'Nor are there any records to show that in any part of the Irish Church relics were known and revered before the union with Rome' (p. 122).

It is true that there is very little evidence of a relic cultus among the Irish. Bury, however, considers the thesis that relics were unknown in Ireland before the seventh century to be 'highly improbable.' There is what seems to be a pertinent reference to veneration of relics by the Irish in Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History,' where Colman is mentioned as having on his return to Ireland after the Conference of Whitby carried with him part of the bones of St. Aidan, leaving part of them at Lindisfarne.

Zimmer says that the removal of the bones by Colman was nothing more than 'a pious act on the part of Colman to take part of the bones of the Irish Apostle . . . so that they should rest in Irish soil.'

But the partition of the bones is suggestive of a relic cultus. And at Lindisfarne, where Colman had been bishop for three years, the bones of St. Aidan had probably been venerated as relics, since even the splinters of a portion of the church against which the saint had rested were believed to possess miraculous attributes.[1]

It is probably true that relics were less popular among the Celts than among the Latins, and there is no mention in Celtic records of such shocking relic traffic as was common throughout Gaul in the sixth century. Zimmer, although he has against him the authority of Bury, might be allowed his fourth

[1] Bede, *H. E.* iii. 18.

point. But I think it is clear that his other three points must be disallowed.

Both Celts and Latins were intolerant of heresy; both realised the necessity of form as an outward sign and safeguard of Catholic unity.

To expect in the sixth century, whether from Celts or Latins, an understanding of how history should be written is surely unreasonable.

The Celts have never been able to separate history from romance; they have seldom left accurate records; hagiography was rather their strong point, certainly not history. The 'Latins,' on the other hand, provided France with Gregory of Tours and England with the Venerable Bede.

Where can we look for a Celtic historian of such calibre as these?

The assertion that the 'Celtic Church' was different in spirit, method and aims from the 'Roman Church' is really an indirect way of stating that the Celts were morally and intellectually better men than the Latins. Historically speaking, a discussion on such a question as this cannot be settled by gratuitously imputing good motives to one side and evil motives to the other; and it is unreasonable to suggest, as Zimmer did, followed by Dr. Hume Brown and his disciples, that the Latins were the serpents and the Celts the innocent doves of the sixth century.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHAIN STILL UNBROKEN

A Scottish Professor who 'determines the course for the succeeding generation'—Last appearance of the 'Living Dog'—Columbanus and Papal Jurisdiction—Arguments from silence—A crowning blunder.

THE Professor of History, tied to his curriculum, can seldom avoid the necessity of adjusting his teaching to the capacity of pupils who for the most part come to him almost entirely deficient of the critical faculty; and so falls easily into a groove.

Even more difficult is the position in Scotland of the ecclesiastical historian, who cannot often afford to ignore a mass of national and sometimes sectarian prejudice which may, if sufficiently provoked, become unpleasantly articulate.

The amateur historical critic encounters none of these difficulties; he has, of course, his own prejudices, but he is not necessarily bound to them; he may have preconceived ideas, but he can easily change them without loss of face; for there is no one to whom he is responsible.

But for a Professor of Ecclesiastical History, who has all his life followed the beaten track, independence of thought must sometimes be very difficult.

The destructive critic, the despoiler of legends, the breaker of idols, is therefore always unpopular. He will not let living dogs lie; he stirs up unrest and controversy; he is unsettling. But he is a necessary evil.

Probably most Professors of Church History find it hard to resist the temptation of publishing their

lectures in book form. If it were not for the threatening presence of destructive criticism this temptation might often prove irresistible.

In Scotland, however, the ecclesiastical historians are still conservatively impervious to criticism.

They have, it must be admitted, acquired a certain discretion, a new reluctance to make dogmatic assertions; but they continue to repeat the old war cries, to reproduce the chipped quotations, still ignorant of modern historical work on their own subject and resting trustfully upon the shattered reputations of discredited predecessors.

The last name on my list is that of a distinguished modern Professor who has treated the subject of early Christianity among the Celts in a manner worthy of comparison with any of the work which has been criticised in these pages, a writer guilty of forging another link in a chain of historical error which can be traced back to the Centuriators of Magdeburg.

The first volume of a 'History of the Church in Scotland' was published in 1913, by Dr. A. R. MacEwen, D.D., late Professor of Church History in New College, Edinburgh.

Here is a man who not only held a responsible position, but whose work is regarded by his fellow-countrymen as a model to follow.

'The work [of Hume Brown] . . . and that of Professor MacEwen in Church History . . . determine the course for the succeeding generation' (R. K. Hannay, Professor of Scottish History and Palaeography at Edinburgh, 'Scottish History and the National Records,' Inaugural Lecture delivered in the University of Edinburgh, 1919, p. 14). 'A most valuable work (on the subject of Scottish Church history) is A. R. MacEwen, "A History of the Church in Scotland"' (from appendix to Rait's 'History of Scotland,' Home University Library Series).

No one could say that a writer with such testimonials as these may not be taken as representing up-to-date historical teaching in Scotland. Dr. MacEwen makes in his preface the ominous declaration that he has made little use of previous textbooks, that he has gone to the sources. My experience of such good resolutions in a preface is that they are seldom carried out in the book.

When I examined Dr. MacEwen's treatment of the letters written to Rome by St. Columbanus, a subject which affords an excellent test of historical straightness, it was at once clear that my expectations were to be justified. The fragments taken from the old compilers were still on active service. Even the living dog occupied his usual place of honour in the front line; once again I met the mutilations which have misrepresented to so many generations the mind of Columbanus. For this historian has only allowed his readers to see two carefully clipped extracts from the correspondence with Rome; his comment on the whole matter is cautiously restricted to a few paragraphs.

First comes our old friend 'the living dog':

> 'Columbanus . . . wrote a firm letter to the Pope, Gregory the Great, addressing him with respect yet appealing to Scripture as his authority, and reproaching Gregory with his blind attachment to the usages of Leo the Great: "a living dog," he wrote, "is better than a dead Leo."'[1]

How ingenious to suggest that Columbanus appealed to Scripture rather than to the Pope; but how prudent not to say that this letter was written to the Pope with the object, specifically declared by the writer, of obtaining a Papal ruling on matters of ecclesiastical discipline!

Firmness and a hint that the decision may not be accepted by the Western Churches does not alter

[1] *History of the Church in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 44.

the fact that this letter was an appeal to the authority of the Pope on a question of discipline and to nothing else.

The second fragment offered to the readers of Dr. MacEwen's book, and presented with the same dexterity as the first, consists in less than a dozen words from the letter to Boniface IV. Brevity is here essential. The reader is hurried past a dangerous piece of the front line lest he should see the position too clearly.

'Towards the papal Chair now occupied by Boniface IV he maintained the same attitude as in his correspondence with Gregory, rebuking Boniface for negligence in suppressing heresy, and calling him to "purge the Chair of Peter from error."' [1]

'Cleanse the Chair of Peter from error,' wrote St. Columbanus, with an important addition which Dr. MacEwen has not thought fit to print, 'if any there be, as they say, which has crept in.'

But even these qualifying words do not give a complete view of the mind of St. Columbanus.

Would not the students brought up on this kind of history be much surprised to learn that in this letter, not the Popes, but they themselves and all those who reject the authority of the Papacy, including Dr. MacEwen and Professor Hannay, are the kind of enemies against whom Columbanus directs the point of his attack?

In this same paragraph where he urges the Pope 'to cleanse the Chair of Peter from all error' by the 'repudiation and cursing of all heretics,' Columbanus goes on to explain what he means by heretics. He blames the Pope for his remissness in not 'immediately condemning and excommunicating that *section who revolted from you.*' [2]

[1] Vol. i. p. 45.

[2] Appendix I, p. 219.

Columbanus could not have expressed more forcibly than he did in this letter to Boniface his refusal to believe in the accusation of error brought against the Roman See. He was horrified at the very idea. His reply to the accuser who first made the charge proves that he regarded the Pope, not merely with deference, not merely, as modern historians of a certain type keep on repeating, with 'respect due to the first prelate of Christendom,' but as the one infallible arbiter and judge.

This reply should have been quoted in context with the fragment 'purge the Chair of Peter from error,' because it shows exactly what those words mean, and that they cannot possibly have the meaning suggested by Dr. MacEwen.

'Someone wrote me a letter just on my hurried arrival in this country and gave me to understand that I must be on my guard against you as having fallen into the sect of Nestorius. I was amazed and, although I did not believe his accusation, yet in order not to do anything that might make it difficult to get at the truth, I made such brief reply as I could, keeping in view both what he had written and the opinion I myself have formed of you—for I believe that the column of the church is always solid in Rome. This I have had sent you to read and to challenge any points in it when I am in the wrong; for I do not dare to profess myself to be one of those who are free from error.'[1]

There are several points in this paragraph which ought to have been emphasised by Dr. MacEwen,

[1] The 'translation' of this passage as given by Hodgkin in *Italy and her Invaders*, vol. ii. p. 142, is remarkable for omissions not entirely to be accounted for by the difficulties of the text:

'For almost at my first entrance into this land I was met by the letters of a certain person, who said that I must beware of you, for you had fallen away into the error of Nestorius. Whom I answered briefly and with astonishment that I did not believe his allegation; but, lest by any chance I should be opposing the truth, I afterwards varied my reply, and sent it along with his letter to you for perusal.'

In a footnote: 'Columbanus here is very obscure, and I am not sure that I have caught his meaning.'

especially for readers who always assert with vigour their determination to make a stand against the 'errors and corruptions' of aliens.

Columbanus was thunderstruck that an accusation of heresy should have been made against the Pope. He states at once his disbelief in the truth of the accusation; and he realised so clearly the danger to the faith involved by official correspondence with heretics on questions of theology, that he sent his reply to the Pope for correction, 'wherever it is contrary to the truth.' Is not this a most practical recognition of Papal authority to make such correction?

Does not the whole incident imply something more than respect due to the senior See of Christendom?

How can this incident be fitted in with the teaching of nineteenth-century scholars such as Bishop Forbes?

'In the Irish Church, until the time of its subjection to the Roman Church in the twelfth century, the relations are those rather of veneration than of submission'[1];

or Haddan, who wrote (in his essay, 'Scots on the Continent,' 'Remains,' p. 292, 1876):

'Every name of great note in the list of Irish Saints or doctors abroad . . . is found either in collision with Rome, or taking a line wholly independent of her'?

or again Warren, who has borrowed the ideas and also the words of Haddan without acknowledgment, and speaks of a

'vast Celtic communion . . . with a long roll of Saints, every name of note on which is either that of one like St. Columbanus taking a line wholly independent of Rome, or like Bishop Colman at the Synod of Whitby, directly in collision with her'[2]?

[1] *Historians of Scotland Series*, vol. v. *SS. Ninian and Kentigern*, 1874, Edin., edited by Bishop Forbes, p. 264.

[2] *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, 1881, p. 45.

Surely it is evident that in the above-quoted passage St. Columbanus, in the most practical way and of his own free will, submits to the finality of Papal decision. It is difficult to understand how in face of this letter it is still possible for scholars in the twentieth century to write books which leave upon the reader's mind the impression that these Irishmen were outside the sphere of Papal influence, and that they belonged to a separate 'Church' which only 'conformed' to Rome at a much later date.

Columbanus had been educated at Bangor, the greatest of Irish monasteries, under Comgall, the greatest of Irish abbots. How can any writer venture to suggest that Comgall, or any of his monks who may have set out from Bangor to evangelise Scotland, could have held an opinion about the Papacy in any important respect different from that expressed by Columbanus in his letter to Pope Boniface ?

Yet this suggestion seems to me to pervade the work of Dr. Douglas Simpson, 'The Origins of Christianity in Aberdeenshire' (Aberdeen, 1925), who quotes with special emphasis the assertion of Ewing (1865) that these Irishmen 'had no system to support, *no Pope* (italics mine), no temporalities.'

It is a serious matter this, not merely that St. Columbanus should be misrepresented, but that Scottish Professors, trusted by the people and praised by their brother Professors, should quote at second hand from important documents which they have not taken the trouble to read.

Two short fragments, both the common property of nineteenth-century hacks; that is all that Dr. MacEwen was able to find space for in his 'valuable' 'History of the Church in Scotland.'

Here once again is an historian who has taken on

trust what he has delivered to the public as the fruit of his own research. This is the kind of historical work which Professor Hannay has told Scotland 'determines the course for the succeeding generation.'

I say that this is the kind of work that Professor Hannay has recommended to the future generation of Scottish students, for this unfair and inadequate treatment of St. Columbanus' text is not merely an unfortunate lapse, a piece of carelessness maliciously picked out and held up unjustly as a typical example of Dr. MacEwen's method. The whole of Dr. MacEwen's book, where it is concerned with the ancient Church, is unfair and inadequate; even the Table of Contents and the Index have been pressed into the service of implication and suggestion.

In order to show how the course is being mapped out for future generations it will be necessary to look at Dr. MacEwen's book a little longer. Most of my 'puppets' will be found parading in the footnotes, but never with a word of censure or warning. On page 90, to take a most reprehensible example of the way this writer evades the truth of history, he asserts that 'the Scotic mission in Burgundy . . . came into sharp collision . . . even with the Popes'; to this unhistorical and misleading statement is appended the following footnote:

'Warren, "Celtic Church," p. 37. Bury ("Life of St. Patrick," p. 370) minimizes the antagonism. See p. 44 . . .'

This is a reference to Warren's introduction to his 'Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church,' a piece of writing which, as I have already pointed out, was shown by Loofs, as long ago as 1882, to be quite valueless. Here is a good example of the way a false historical tradition is perpetuated, of the way

controversy is made tiresome and apparently endless, of the way readers can be fatigued and confused by a juggling with cross references.

Having dug up Warren, Dr. MacEwen first of all proceeds in this footnote to reprimand, not Loofs, the original grave-digger, but that well-known scholar Professor Bury who has erected tombstones over many an ancient controversy. Then the reader is told to 'see page 44' of Dr. MacEwen's book to look upon what is, I hope, the last appearance of the 'living dog,' to read once again this garbled fragment taken at second-hand from some nineteenth-century hack. But an historian such as Bury who ventured to quote from the letters of Columbanus something more than 'the living dog' and 'purge the Chair of Peter from error' is held guilty of 'minimizing.'

If this is the way that the 'succeeding generation' is going to handle the sources of history, then dismal indeed is the future of Scottish scholarship. Here, as Columbanus said to Boniface IV, 'we have more need of tears than of words.' [1]

It is not easy to convey an adequate idea of how the history of early Christianity in Scotland has been mishandled by this writer without making long extracts accompanied with tedious corrections, because he offends even more grievously by implication than by direct statement. I will therefore confine myself to pointing out two places where he has blundered, not this time by copying others, but entirely on his own initiative.

These two blunders are a characteristic and inevitable result of Dr. MacEwen's method (which determines, we are told, the course for the succeeding generation). Carelessness or ignorance might

[1] Appendix I, p. 225.

possibly account for the first; but no historian could have committed the second misdemeanour who was not literally, that is to say, as I intend to prove, physically, blinded by prejudice.

I will take first his version of the Easter controversy which plays such a considerable part in the history of the early Church in these islands. The main facts are not disputed.

Easter was observed during the first quarter of the seventh century by all the Christian world according to the Roman reformed cycle; the Celts stood apart and refused to adopt the common date or to make any alteration in the customs of their ancestors. So sensitive were the Irish on this point that they on one occasion, as it is told by Bede, refused even to sit at table with those who followed the reformed Roman system. The disagreement was perilous to unity; a formal schism was avoided by the prudent policy, or perhaps the indifference, of the Roman Pontiffs, who for a long time took no vigorous action.

In England this Celtic obstinacy led to intolerable confusion. A Conference was therefore called for by Oswy in 664, to discuss the whole question, Colman appearing for the Celtic, Wilfrid for the Roman usage. On both sides the arguments were inconclusive and irrelevant. The meeting failed to bring about a reconciliation, and Colman with most of his followers returned to Ireland unconvinced.[1] The quarrel was, as far as documentary evidence goes, parochial and concerned with Church discipline. The conference was held, as Bede distinctly states, to try to arrange for synchronisation of the date for keeping Easter and to obtain uniformity in some minor details of discipline.

[1] *H.E.* book iii. ch. xxvi.

It is Dr. MacEwen's distinction to have produced from the Conference [1] at Whitby an entirely new argument to support the thesis that the Celtic Christians of the sixth century were independent of the Papacy.

'At the end of the fifth century and throughout the sixth the Church of the Scots in their Irish home was certainly not in subjection to Rome . . .'

because, and then in a footnote comes the new proof:

'When the Scotic usages were debated at Whitby (664) no reference of any kind was made to Patrick, although the Roman case would have become unanswerable if he could have been quoted as pioneer of the Roman usages.' [2]

No one has noticed that Dr. MacEwen's 'proof' is based upon a chronological error.

The 'Roman usage' in question was only adopted in Rome more than fifty years *after the death of St. Patrick.*

When the so-called Council of Whitby was sitting, the official date of Easter was calculated according to a Paschal table with a cycle of 19 years, which had been drawn up by Dionysius and first adopted in Rome after 525. St. Patrick died about 460. So he clearly could not have been quoted by Wilfrid at Whitby as a supporter of the current Dionysian cycle.

Dr. MacEwen has asked the wrong question.

It is obviously no good asking why St. Patrick was not appealed to in support of customs inaugurated long after his death. But it may well be asked why

[1] Green wrote of the 'Great Council of Whitby, where the future ecclesiastical allegiance of England should be decided' (*Short History*, vol. i. p. 55). But Duchesne has drawn attention to the fact that the word 'Council' is not suitable to describe 'une simple réunion d'experts assemblés pour éclairer la conscience du roi' (*L'Église au vie siècle*, p. 619).

[2] Vol. i. p. 37.

Colman did not claim the Irish Saint as a pioneer of Celtic usage.

Colman claimed the right to adhere to the custom of his forebears based on an old table which had been appointed and used by Rome before 343. Why did he not appeal to St. Patrick ?

The answer must be that Patrick was not appealed to by either of the contending parties at Whitby because he had followed an entirely different system, probably a modification of the 84 cycle which had been adopted by Rome after 343.

Professor Bury has shown that this paschal evidence appears to be another proof of ' pre-Patrician Christianity in Ireland '—a proof to which the neglect of Colman to quote St. Patrick at Whitby seems to lend additional force.[1]

But now comes another point.

The silence of Wilfrid is now difficult to explain.

If Wilfrid had known that St. Patrick observed Easter at a different date from that used by Colman and his disciples, then he could easily have demolished the Irish argument from antiquity.

The point is most important. Nobody at Whitby seems to have known that St. Patrick observed yet a third date for keeping Easter ; or if this fact was remembered, no one thought it worthy of notice. From all this the rational conclusion seems to be that St. Patrick did not hold in the eyes of the disputants at Whitby the position of importance as Apostle of Ireland which he acquired in history at a later date.

This argument should, however, not be carried so far as it was by Zimmer, who in his article written for ' Real-Encyklop. für prot. Theol. und Kirche ' noticed this omission of St. Patrick's name at Whitby and used it to support the thesis that St. Patrick

[1] *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 373.

had no historical existence. Professor Bury has shown that Zimmer's speculations are untenable.

Dr. MacEwen's treatment of this Easter question, his blunder of dates and the important argument he built thereon, provide another illustration of the kind of history which Professor Hannay has declared will determine the course for succeeding generations; I sincerely hope he is wrong.

I will conclude my examination of Dr. MacEwen's work with an example of his temerity in using an argument from silence, an example unique, I believe, in the historical literature of Scotland, or indeed of any other country.

This argument, its defect unnoticed by the students, critics, or brother Professors, occurs in the course of some remarks which this historian has to make about one of the most interesting documents of early Scottish history.

A peculiar kind of interest in this document, the 'Life of Queen Margaret of Scotland,' attributed to Turgot, her confessor and life-long friend, led Dr. MacEwen into a most unusual error, an error that escapes classification; that stands alone in the literature of Scottish history. Not even in the nineteenth century did any historian produce such a remarkable argument from silence as is suggested, not of course frankly stated, in the following paragraph:

> 'The omissions of this almost contemporary narrative [the Life of Queen Margaret] are significant. While Penance, Fasting, the Confessional, the Sacred Hours, Crucifixes, the Virgin and the Miracle of the Sacrament are named with the utmost reverence, *the words Rome, Pope, Archbishop, Bishop do not once occur*.' [1]

I have taken the liberty to italicise the concluding words of this historical curiosity.

[1] Vol. i. p. 159.

It is most remarkable that no reader of Dr. MacEwen's book, no critic, no brother Professor, has realised the true significance of the 'omission' so carefully noted by this historian who is a model for the future generation. Turgot's 'Life of Queen Margaret' is so short that the whole story, of which Forbes Leith has made an excellent translation, can be read in a few minutes. 'The words Rome, Pope, Archbishop, Bishop,' said Dr. MacEwen, '*do not once occur.*'

Observe therefore a paragraph taken from this 'Life' which has been quoted in full by Skene, Grub, Shairp, Story, and many other well-known writers; it reads as follows:

'Let us hold the Lord's day in veneration because of the Lord's resurrection, which took place upon it; and let us not do servile labours upon [the day] in which we know that we were redeemed from the devil's servitude. This too the blessed pope Gregory affirms saying: "On Sundays we must cease earthly labour, and apply ourselves only to prayers, etc., etc."' ('Early Sources of Scottish History,' vol. 2, p. 72. The quotation from Pope Gregory is in his 13th letter. 'M.G.H. Epistolae,' vol. ii. p. 368.)

That Dr. MacEwen had read this 'Life of Queen Margaret,' and that he had read it most carefully, is obvious from the fact that he gives, as I have shown above, a sort of index of the references it contains to Scottish religious practice; and moreover he quotes from it repeatedly.

It is not easy to suggest how he can have failed to notice, not only the reference by name to Pope Gregory the Great, a reference which, as a matter of fact, occurs twice, but the quotation from a Papal letter brought forward by Queen Margaret to support a strict observance of Sunday, one of the few religious practices backed by Papal command, and not by

Scriptural authority, which is still recognised in Scotland.

This blundering is typical of Dr. MacEwen's work. His inadequate treatment of the letters of Columbanus; his muddle of the Easter controversy; his fumbling with the 'Life of Queen Margaret': these are three examples I have chosen out of many because they are the least tiresome to handle.

On almost every page where he deals with the old Church, directly or indirectly, there is a fallacious argument or a misquotation, or a suggestion of ideas that can no longer be safely brought out into the open.

It has been very difficult not to say hard things about the historical methods of this writer. Black indeed is the future of scholarship in Scotland if such methods are to 'determine the course for the succeeding generation.' [1]

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Nearly four hundred years have passed since Luther wrote that pious and Christian souls 'could bring no higher or more acceptable praise-offering to God than all they can say or write against this bloodthirsty, unclean, blaspheming whore of the devil.' During those four hundred years, with all the power of the pulpits in the sixteenth century, of tracts in the seventeenth, of dissertations in the eighteenth, of the press and of the popular historians in these latter days, the campaign has prospered. But the end is in sight. You cannot fool all the people all the time with a partial selection of the facts, with a constant repetition of misquotations, with a persistent suppression of the documents.

[1] See, however, *The Celtic Church and the See of Peter*, Oxford, 1927, by J. C. McNaught, Minister of Kilmuir Easter. By this writer the Chain of Error has been broken; and it will now be extremely difficult to patch it up again.

I do not mean that a happy time is coming when historians will always agree; when historical judgments will be as uniform as the answers to sums in arithmetic; when facts will no longer be coloured by national or religious sentiment; when controversy will cease. But I am convinced that the end is in sight of the period during which history to be popular had to appeal to the prejudices of stupid, uneducated and conceited people; that the end has already come, except in the underworld of historical literature, of abuse, malicious suggestion and innuendo.

The day may not be very far distant when historians will no longer think it a disgrace to follow the example of Augustin Thierry and correct their own books.

To those who still persist in following the beaten track of historical error, who refuse to admit their mistakes, who refuse to accept the facts, or to read the documents with a judicial eye, who put into practice the principle, which they repudiate in theory, that the end justifies the means, I recommend one final quotation from a writer who is not on my side, who is indeed a declared enemy. 'Sooner or later,' has written Alfred Loisy, 'reality will be revenged on the attack against it; the greater the lie, so much the more will it ultimately appear grotesque, and the greater will be its fall.' *Veritas temporis filia!*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

EPISTOLA COLUMBANI AD BONIFATIUM PAPAM

Lombardy, when Columbanus arrived there about 612, was one of the last strongholds of the heresy known as the Three Chapters, an account of which makes, as far as I have been able to understand it, a not very edifying story. Three theological compositions by (1) Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia; (2) Ibas, Bishop of Edessa; (3) Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, were asserted, many years after they were written, to have contained the germ of Nestorianism. Although at the Council of Chalcedon the three Bishops had been recognised as orthodox, their writings were condemned by the Second General Council of Constantinople in 553. Thus there is an appearance of contradiction. Pope Vigilius confirmed the decision of this Council under pressure of the Emperor Justinian.

Behind these quarrels can be observed the conflict of secular and national interests; the theologians were often the catspaws and sometimes the agents of political intriguers. Columbanus is an advocate of simple solutions. Like President Wilson at the Peace Conference of 1918, he arrives with a remedy, but with no knowledge of the disease. Everything can be settled and peace restored if only the Pope will call together a Synod, 'therefore, beloved, speedily agree and meet together, for I cannot see,' he says, 'how Christian can contend with Christian about the Faith.' Columbanus did not know the East. He did not know of such monks as Barsumas, who, as Duchesne puts it, would have instantly brained anyone who did not agree with his terminology.

Little knowledge of the fierce Eastern conflicts seems to have reached the monastery of Bangor. Yet what little information the monks could have gathered from the works of Jerome and Augustine about still earlier quarrels might have provided them

with some idea of the storms from which the ship of Peter had emerged, if not unscathed, at least still seaworthy, to be refitted by Gregory the Great for further tempests.

Columbanus, with a lack of historical vision, a defect common to his time, does not seem to have realised the greatness of Gregory. Nor, what is more surprising, does he seem to have understood the meanness of Vigilius. 'Perhaps,' he says with careful irony, 'Vigilius did not watch well.' But if the Irishman had been acquainted with the full history of this unfortunate Pope his comment might have been, ought to have been, expressed with less restraint.

There is a passage in this letter which seems to suggest that even in monastic Ireland unity had not always been maintained without a struggle.

'For I, coming from the uttermost bounds of the world, have seen spiritual leaders fighting the battle of the Lord.'

This reference to spiritual leaders is not likely to be intended as a compliment to his contemporary Columba of Iona who left Ireland under civil displeasure; the work of pioneers is only appreciated by their successors. I think that Columbanus must have had in mind the suppression by the monastic authorities, perhaps by Comgall, of some local outbreak of heresy, the germs of which might have been transmitted from the East by anonymous carriers.

As evidence of the superiority of Irish over Gallic or Roman culture in the sixth century this letter is disappointing. The thought of the writer is undisciplined, and his expression of ideas, his disjointed style, indicate a want of literary training. He cannot keep to the point.

Too much stress should not be laid upon the rudeness of his Latin, as many defects in the text may be due to the mistakes of careless copyists.[1] Hints of Greek and Hebrew appear as if thrown out by a writer who was proud to have a smattering of those languages.

The letter has many points of interest beyond its bearing on the Papal question and is worthy of the attention of competent scholarship.

[1] Skene in the second volume of *Celtic Scotland* completes the evidence for his ignorance of the writings of Columbanus, already sufficiently clear on page 7, by observing on page 422 that these letters 'show a mastery of Latin as it was then used by ecclesiastical writers . . . and a perfect knowledge of the contemporary history and literature of the Church.'

Columbanus to Pope Boniface IV.[1]

To the most illustrious head of all the Churches of the whole of Europe, that specially gentle Pope, that eminent prelate, shepherd of shepherds, that most reverend watcher: to a most dignified one the most humble presumes to write: the least to the greatest: a rustic to a denizen of the city: a man tongue-tied to one who is most eloquent: the last to the first: a stranger to a native born: a poor wretch to the most powerful: strange to tell, an unheard of thing, a rara avis, the dove to Boniface his father.

Pulcherrimo omnium totius Europae Ecclesiarum capiti, Papae praedulci, praecelso praesuli, pastorum pastori, reverendissimo speculatori: humillimus celsissimo, minimus maximo, agrestis urbano, micrologus eloquentissimo, extremus primo, peregrinus indigenae, pauperculus praepotenti—mirum dictu, nova res!—rara avis scribere audet Bonifacio patri palumbus.

Who can stand listening to a shaveling? Who would not at once say: Who is this talkative presumptuous man who unasked dares to write such things? Who will not vindictively at once break out into the old reproach with which the Hebrew of old who was maltreating his brother answers Moses, 'Who has made thee ruler or judge over us?'? The first answer I make is that there is no presumption when there is a clear necessity of improving the church. And if personalities trouble you, think not of the man who speaks but of what he says. For why should a Christian from abroad suppress what the Arians at your

Quis poterit glaber audire? Quis non statim dicat: Quis est iste garrulus praesumptuosus, qui non rogatus talia scribere audet? quis talionis incentor non confestim in illud antiquum probrosum erumpat elogium, quo Moysi Hebraeus ille, qui faciebat iniuriam fratri suo, respondit: 'Quis te constituit principem aut iudicem super nos?' Cui ego prior respondeo, non esse praesumptionem, ubi constat esse necessitatem ad ecclesiae aedificationem; et si in persona cavillatur, non quis dico, sed quid dico, consideret. Quid enim tacebit peregrinus christianus, quod iam diu declamat vicinus Arianus? 'Meliora namque sunt

[1] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolarum Merovingici et Karolini Aevi*, tom. iii. pp. 170–177.

doors have long since openly declared? 'For better are the wounds dealt by a friend than the hypocritical embraces of an enemy.'

Others are happy to detract in secret, I in sadness and pain shall make my accusation in public, I shall insist on the evils of a mischievous schism, not on the advantages of an unholy complaisancy. It is not therefore out of vanity or impertinence that I, a creature of the lowest order, presume to address such illustrious men, for indignation rather than pride forces me to remind you, with such humble hint as becomes me, that the name of God is blasphemed among the peoples on account of the quarrels going on between you. For I confess to you that I am grieved at the ill repute of the chair of St. Peter. I know the question is rather too big for me to deal with, and that I shall be putting my face under live coals, as the saying is, at the very start. What does my reputation before men matter compared with the need for showing zeal for the faith? Before God and the angels I shall not be confounded; it is a glory for God's sake to be confounded before men. If my advice is followed it will be to the common gain: if my advice be rejected I alone will pay. For I intend to speak as a friend, a disciple, and a humble follower of yours, not as a stranger, therefore with perfect frankness I shall address myself to our masters, the captains and mystic helmsmen of the vessel of the church; saying to them: Be

vulnera amici, quam fraudulenta oscula inimici.' Alii detrahunt laeti in secreto; ego tristis ac dolens arguam in publico, sed scismatis noxii mala, non impiorum pacificorum bona. Non igitur pro vanitate aut procacitate scribere vilissimae qualitatis homunculus tam praecelsis viris praesumo: dolor enim potius me, quam elatio compellit vobis indicare humillima, ut decet, suggestione, quod nomen Dei per vos contendentes utrimque blasphematur inter gentes.

Doleo enim, fateor, de infamia cathedrae sancti Petri: scio tamen super me esse negotium, et quod prima fronte sub prunas, ut dicitur, faciem ponam. Sed quid mihi facies coram hominibus, ubi zelus fidei prodi necesse est? Coram Deo et angelis non confundar; laus est pro Deo coram hominibus confundi. Si exaudiar, commune lucrum erit; si despiciar, mea merces erit. Ego enim ut amicus, ut discipulus, ut pedisequus vester, non ut alienus loquar; ideo libere eloquar nostris utpote magistris ac spiritualis navis gubernatoribus ac mysticis proretis dicens: Vigilate, quia

on watch, for the sea is stormy and tossed by furious winds, because not only does the threatening wave, which when roused hollows out the sea into foaming whirlpools, rise tremendously surging from afar, and thrust the sails in front of it to death with furrowed masses, but a hurricane of all that element restless and raging on every side threatens to wreck the mystical vessel: therefore I take courage, as a frightened sailor, to call 'Be on the watch' because water has already gained the ship of the church and the vessel is in danger.

For all we Irish living at the uttermost ends of the earth are the disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul and of all the disciples who wrote the sacred canon under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: receiving nothing outside the evangelical and apostolical doctrine; no heretic, no Jew, or schismatic was ever amongst us; but the catholic faith as it was first delivered to us from you, the successors, that is, of the holy apostles, is retained amongst us unchanged. Fortified by this confidence, I am stimulated to take courage, to rouse you against those who miscall you and call you receivers of heretics and schismatics, that the bold and confident tone with which I replied to them on your behalf may not be in vain, and that not we but the enemy be confounded. For I have pledged myself on your behalf that the Roman church will never defend a heretic against the catholic faith; so, I think, a disciple should believe

mare procellosum est et flabris exasperatur feralibus, quia non a sola minax unda, quae etiam permota pontum semper cautis spumosis concavat vorticibus, hyperbolice licet de longe turgescens extollitur et ante se carbasa sulcatis Orco molibus trudit, sed tempestas totius elementi, nimirum undique consurgentis et undique commoti, mysticae navis naufragium intentat; ideo audeo timidus nauta clamare: Vigilate, quia aqua iam intravit in ecclesiae navem, et navis periclitatur. Nos enim sanctorum Petri et Pauli et omnium discipulorum divinum canonem spiritu sancto scribentium discipuli sumus, toti Iberi, ultimi habitatores mundi, nihil extra evangelicam et apostolicam doctrinam recipientes: nullus hereticus, nullus iudaeus, nullus scismaticus fuit; sed fides catholica, sicut a vobis primum, sanctorum videlicet apostolorum successoribus, tradita est, inconcussa tenetur. Qua fiducia roboratus ausus sum, acsi stimulatus, suscitare vos contra eos, qui blasphemant vos et hereticorum receptores clamant ac scismaticos vocant, ut gloriatio mea, qua pro vobis fidus illis respondens locutus sum, non sit inanis, et illi confundantur, non nos. Ego enim pro vobis promisi, quod nullum hereticum Romana ecclesia defendat contra catholicam fidem, sicut discipulos ita decet sentire

about his master. Therefore with a willing mind and affectionate willingness to listen, accept the unavoidable presumption of my suggestion; for whatever I shall say, whether it be edifying or orthodox, will stand to your credit, for the learning of his pupil brings credit to the master; so if the son shows wisdom of speech the father will rejoice; and yours will be the merit, since, as I have said, it comes from you; for the purity of the stream is not to be ascribed to the channel, but to the source. If you find in this or the other letter against Agrippinus, who is the occasion of my writing, the rough and ready expressions of too vehement zeal, put it down to my obtuseness, not to my arrogance.

de magistro. Idcirco libenti animo et piis auribus necessariae insinuationem praesumptionis meae suscipite; quidquid enim dixero aut utile aut orthodoxum, vobis reputabitur; laus enim magistri in discipulorum suorum doctrina est; ideo si sapienter locutus fuerit filius, laetificabitur pater; et vestra laus erit, quia a vobis, ut dixi, processit; non enim rivo puritas, sed fonti reputanda est. Si vero aliqua tamquam zeli modum excedentis verba aut in hac aut in altera contra Agripp.,[1] qui me movit ad scribendum, epistola inveneritis incondita, meae indiscretioni, non elationi deputetis.

Be on the watch therefore, for the peace of the church, go to the help of your sheep already frightened as if by wolves, and afraid of you too, for in a state of panic, which is to be sure excessive, they have been driven from pillar to post, they draw near and then go back and cannot put off their apprehension. Sound therefore the whistle of the true shepherd, O Pope, the familiar voice, and stand between your sheep and the wolves, that laying aside all panic they may anew recognise you as their chief shepherd.

Vigilate itaque pro ecclesiae pace, subvenite ovibus vestris iam tamquam luporum terroribus pavidis, quae vos ipsos insuper nimio utpote pavore in alternantem circumactae convertibulum timent. Ideo dubitantes, partim venientes, partim vero recedentes, sicut veniunt, sic revertuntur et semper in pavore sunt. Quamobrem utere veri, o papa, pastoris sibilis notaque voce et sta inter illas et lupos, ut, deposito pavore, tunc primum te ex integro cognoscant pastorem. Populus enim quem video, dum multos sustinet hereticos, zelosus est et cito tamquam grex pavidus turbatur et inde non cito securus

For the people whom I see, while they suffer from many heretics, are full of goodwill but like a timid flock, easily frightened, and afterwards not

[1] See below, p. 229. This letter has not survived.

so easily quieted; because there have been so many wolves in Italy whose cubs cannot all be dashed to pieces, grown to such a size as they have in their dens. Nevertheless may God destroy such a race, and feed his flock and spur you to activity. Persevere watchfully in your pastoral duty, standing as a sentinel night and day, that you may see your walnut tree staff, which you may afterwards deserve to see full of fruit at the time of gathering true fruits.

est, quia tantos Italia lupos habuit, quorum catuli vix toti possunt elidi, dum nimirum inter antra tanti enutriti sunt. Attamen deleat Deus tale semen, et nutriat greges suos teque compungat: vigilanter insistas officio tuo pastorali, stans super custodiam tuam die ac nocte, ut videas baculum illum nuceum, quem uncinum postea videre merearis tempore fructus colligendi veros.

In order therefore that you may not lose the honour due to an apostle, maintain the apostolic faith, strengthen it by your testimony, by your writing, by your synodal decrees, so that no one may have the right to oppose you.

Ut ergo honore apostolico non careas, conserva fidem apostolicam, confirma testimonio, robora scripto, muni synodo, ut nullus tibi iure resistat.

Do not despise this little piece of advice given by a foreigner, for you have taught him and it is your cause that he is championing.[1] For the world is passing away, the Prince of Pastors is approaching, take heed lest he find you careless, and inflicting on your fellow servants the blows of bad example and eating and drinking with Hebrews; lest your carelessness meet with the reward promised in the following words: 'But if any man know not he shall not be known.' For it is not enough for you that you should be anxious for yourself, for you have taken upon yourself the care of many; to whom more is entrusted, from him more shall be demanded.

Noli despicere consiliolum alienigenae, tamquam doctor illius zelantis pro te. Mundus iam declinat; princeps pastorum appropinquat: cave ne te negligentem inveniat et conservos pugnis mali exempli percutientem manducantemque cum Hebraeis et bibentem, ne contingant sequentia securitati: 'Qui enim ignorat, ignorabitur.' Non sufficit tibi, quod pro te ipso sollicitus sis, qui multorum curam suscepisti; cui enim plus creditur, plus ab eo exigitur.

[1] This passage is sufficient, even if there were no other, to expose the ignorance of those historians who have asserted that Columbanus was an enemy of the Papacy.

Be on the watch, I beseech thee, O Pope, again I say watch, because perhaps Vigilius did not watch carefully whom these people that blame you denounce as the source of scandal; watch first of all for the faith, then for enjoining good works, and for eradicating vices; for your vigilance will be the salvation of many, as on the other hand your carelessness will bring many to ruin. Let Isaias send you to the mountain, you 'who dost evangelise Sion.' Nay through Isaias let God according to the interpretation of your name, place you upon a watchtower of true contemplation, in which, placed upon an eminence, as it were, higher than other mortals and near to heavenly things, 'raising your voice like a trumpet, you may announce to the people' of your Lord, entrusted to you by Him, 'their sins, and to the House of Jacob their iniquities.' Do not fear to be called a liar because you have a message which it is your duty to deliver, and, what is a more serious matter, through the false security of their pastors, many in this district are cast down, and many deceived by the prosperity of a most barren abundance.

Since therefore, according to the threat of the Lord, the blood of so many shall be required of the hands of their pastors, careful watch should be kept: that is, the word of God should be frequently preached by the pastors, namely, the overseers and teachers of the church, so that none should perish through ignorance; for if any through carelessness shall perish,

Vigila itaque, quaeso, papa, vigila, et iterum dico: vigila, quia forte non bene vigilavit Vigilius, quem caput scandali isti clamant, qui vobis culpam iniciunt. Vigila primo pro fide, deinde pro operibus fidei iubendis vitiisque calcandis, quia tua vigilantia multorum erit salus, sicut e contrario tua securitas multorum erit vastatio. Mittat te Isaias in montem, 'qui evangelizas Sion,' immo per Isaiam Deus iuxta tui nominis interpretationem in speculam verae contemplationis ponat, in qua, quasi cunctis mortalibus altior positus vicinusque caelestium effectus, 'exaltans quasi tuba vocem tuam annuncies populo' domini tui, tibi ab eo commisso, 'peccata eorum et domui Iacob iniquitates eorum.' Noli timere culpam mendacii: habes enim, quod annunciare debeas; multi enim, quod gravius est, per securitatem pastorum in his regionibus deiecti sunt et multi per prosperitatem infelicissimae abundantiae decepti sunt. Ideo, quia iuxta minas Domini sanguis tantorum de manibus requirendus erit pastorum, vigilandum est diligenter, id est: praedicandum est frequenter verbum Domini, a pastoribus scilicet, ecclesiae speculatoribus et magistris, ut nullus pereat per ignorantiam; si enim per socordiam perierit, suus sanguis in suum caput reputabitur.

his blood shall be on his own head. But why I have insisted so vigorously on matters well known to all, I shall let you know in what follows: for this too bears on my original argument; both kinds of abuses are bound up together and those I referred to at the beginning depend on to those I am now hinting at; the latter must therefore be cut away to begin with. For one who has no care for religion is unconcerned with error; this is the whole issue, here lies the whole matter, this is the 'two-edged sword,' 'reaching unto the division of the flesh and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, the discerner of the intents of the mind,' which ought to cut the sinews to the bone.

Hence 'our speech is seasoned with divine salt,' for it is prescribed that every sacrifice should be sprinkled with salt; hence may the sparks of that divine fire, which our Lord came to enkindle on earth, fall from heaven and burn wood and hay and stubble which are wrongly placed by many people on the admirable foundation upon which all we Christians founded, on which 'nothing else can be placed, except that which has been placed, which is Jesus Christ.' Alas how much fuel for hell is everywhere prepared from this unhappy structure, to kindle which there fell that flashing spark of the word of the Lord, from the unmeasured vastness of the ever living conflagration, saying: 'Watch over yourselves lest perchance your hearts be over-weighted in gluttony and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and the day of sudden

Sed cur haec mordacius diu omnibus nota commemoraverim, in subiectis subnectam. Faciunt enim et haec ad proposita suggestionis primae genera; ligata namque sunt simul utraque: ex his enim pendent illa; et ideo ista primum amputanda sunt; non enim curat de errore, qui non curat de religione: hic enim totus consistit agon, hic tota stat causa; hic ille 'gladius bis acutus,' 'pertingens usque ad divisionem carnis et animae compagum medullarum, qui est discretor cordis et cogitationum,' usque ad os debet secare nervos.

Hinc 'sale divino sermo noster conditus est,' omne nempe sacrificium sale aspergi praeceptum est; hinc scintillae de igne illo divino, quem Dominus in terram mittere venit, descendentes comburant lignum, foenum, stipulam, quae male superaedificantur a multis super fundamentum hoc admirandum, cui toti superaedificamur christiani, super quod 'nemo aliud potest ponere praeter id, quod positum est, quod est Iesus Christus.' Heu quanta gehennae fomenta ubique praeparantur de his infelicibus aedificiis, super quae comburenda sermo ille scintillans Domini, descendens de incendii illius semper vivi immensitate, cecidit dicendo: 'Attendite vobis, ne forte aggraventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate et curis huius vitae, et superveniat in

judgment overtake you: as a snare it shall come upon all who are seated upon the face of the whole earth.'

You see with what terror our Lord arouses us from slumber and from harmful indifference to watchfulness. Therefore I have said: O Pope, watch; it is now the time to arise from sleep; the Lord approaches, and we stand on the verge of the last dangerous days. Behold the nations are disturbed, kingdoms are falling away, therefore the Most High will speedily give voice and the earth will be moved. I, as in fear, because not a stout warrior, see that a horde of enemies has surrounded us, and I do my best to arouse you as the prince of our leaders, by shouts of warning which may be considered interfering, for it is you that are concerned with danger threatening the whole army of God in these districts, which is in the field rather sleeping than fighting and—what is more lamentable—surrendering to the enemy rather than resisting him.

The whole crisis waits on you who have the power to direct all things, to make war, to arouse the leaders, to command arms to be taken up, to form the line of battle, to make the trumpet sound everywhere, and to prepare finally the clash of battle, yourself in the van. For it looks as if we Christians in these parts have for a long time been beaten in the spiritual conflict; first by sensuality and proud conversation, then by the lukewarmness of our vacillating faith, through which weakness we have been

vos dies illa repentina: tamquam laqueus enim superveniet in omnes, qui sedent super faciem universae terrae.'

Vides, quo terrore Dominus nostrum soporem ac noxium torporem ad vigilantiam suscitat, ne imparati inveniamur. Ideo ego dixi: Papa vigila, 'tempus est de somno surgere'; Dominus appropinquat, et prope iam in fine consistimus inter tempora periculosa. Ecce conturbantur gentes, inclinantur regna: ideo cito dabit vocem suam Altissimus, et movebitur terra. Ego quasi timidus, dum non sum fortis bellator, quia hostem adversariorum circumdedisse nos video, te licet importunis clamoribus tamquam ducum principem suscitare conor; ad te namque totius exercitus Domini in his regionibus, in campo potius torpentis quam pugnantis et partim, quod lacrimabilius est, adversariis potius manus dantis quam resistentis, periculum pertinet.

Te totum expectat, qui potestatem habes omnia ordinandi, bellum instituendi, duces excitandi, arma corripi iubendi, aciem construendi, tubas undique sonandi, certamen demum, te in fronte gradiente, ineundi; quia vero diu, ut apparet in hac regione, in hoc spirituali bello victi sumus etiam christiani, vitiis primum carnalibus ac pomposa conversatione, deinde fidei vacillantis tepore, qua infirmata inimicis nostris dum—non sensimus

surrounded, unawares, by a threefold enemy sent against us as a punishment for our excessive negligence. For the cause of all our troubles is this blind sense of security born of prosperity. I am surprised, I admit, at this false confidence whence so deadly an apathy has overcome almost everyone; I know not what kind of feelings, what ears, what sentiments are those which even the burning words of the Lord Himself cannot arouse to watchfulness, fervour and zeal, to contempt of the world, to the poverty of Christ, as so many nations have been so aroused. For I coming from the uttermost bounds of the world, where I have seen spiritual leaders fighting the battles of the Lord, and hoping, before now, to see stronger and more skilled leaders in this holy conflict; and finding things as they are, (as one after the fight who looks upon the battle-field wet with blood of the slain,) aghast, full of pain and dread, I look towards you who of our leaders are the only hope, strong through the honour due to Peter the holy apostle, I look towards you in tears for the slaughter of so great an army.

Just as the frail bark of my wit has not so much put out into the deep (according to the expression of Christ) as stayed up to now in one place, this paper cannot contain everything my mind for various reasons wished to include within the compass of this letter—besides I am asked by the King that I should put before your kindly ears in detail the question that is worrying him, for the schism of

—circumdati sumus triplicibus, qui dati sunt nobis ad vindictam nostrae luxuriosae securitatis. Omnium enim malorum causa est caeca prosperitatis securitas.

Miror, fateor, talem securitatem et unde hic letalis sopor totos pene cooperit; nescio quae corda, quae aures, qui sensus, quos nequaquam ignita ipsius Domini verba suscitaverunt ad vigilantiam zeli iugiter ferventis, ad contemptum mundi, ad paupertatem Christi sicut multas gentes ita erexerunt. Ego enim de extremo mundo veniens, ubi praelia Domini praeliari spirituales duces conspexi, et sperans, in antea videre fortiores peritioresque huius sancti conflictus duces, et ita inveniens, acsi quidam campi bellici roscidus cadaverum ac madidus post pugnam contemplator, stupeo et dolens ac timens ad teque tantum, qui unica spes de principibus es per honorem potens Petri apostoli sancti, respiciens plango tanti exercitus stragem.

Sed quia fragilis ingenii cymba non tam in altum iuxta verbum Domini ducta est, quam adhuc in uno haereat loco—non enim carta totum comprehendere potest, quod animus, variantibus causis, epistolae angustiis concludere voluit—tum a rege rogor, ut singillatim suggeram tuis piis auribus sui negotium doloris: dolor namque suus est scisma

the people is a grief to him on account of the Queen and his son, and perhaps for his own sake too; for he is said to have declared that if he knew for a certainty about the faith, he himself would believe.

populi pro regina, pro filio, forte et pro se ipso; fertur enim dixisse, si certum sciret, et ipse crederet.

Let us return to the book which we have left on the bank. Therefore lest the old enemy should bind men by that long rope of error, let the cause of schism be cut away, I beseech you, by the knife, so to speak, of St. Peter, wielded by you, that is by the confession of the true faith in the synod, and by the repudiation and cursing of all heretics, that you may cleanse the chair of Peter from all error, if there be any, as they say, that has crept in; if its purity be not acknowledged by all. It is a matter of grief and to be deplored if the catholic faith be not held in the apostolic See.

Redeamus ad librum, quem iuxta ripam dimisimus. Ne igitur hoc fune erroris longissimo liget latro antiquus homines, causa scismatis incidatur, quaeso, confestim a te cultello quodammodo sancti Petri, id est vera in synodo fidei confessione et hereticorum omnium abominatione ac anathematisatione, ut mundes cathedram Petri ab omni errore, horrore,[1] si quis est, ut aiunt, intromissus, si non puritas agnoscatur ab omnibus. Dolendum enim ac deflendum est, si fides catholica in sede apostolica non tenetur.

Now to speak my whole mind, lest I seem to flatter even you more than is right, it is also to be deplored that you did not, as you should have done long ago, take the first steps in zeal for the truth, seeing that you had the lawful authority, by, (after demonstrating the purity of your faith,) immediately condemning and excommunicating that section who revolted from you. The result is that they dare actually to give a bad name to the chief seat of the orthodox faith.

Sed ut totum dicam, ne adulari ultra fas etiam vobis videar, dolendum quoque est, quod non vos priores pro zelo fidei, ut decebat diu, partem a vobis recedentem, utpote qui potestatem legitimam habuistis, continuo, ostensa prius vestrae fidei puritate, condemnastis nec excommunicastis; quare vel infamare audent fidei orthodoxae sedem principalem.

You know what severe censure the Council of Nicea passed on those who accused the innocent. But while I say

Scitis enim, quam saeva animadversione a patribus in synodo Nicena sancta damnati sunt innocentium criminatores. Sed

[1] 'horrore videtur mendo irrepsisse,' in marg. *Collectanea sacra*, Patrick Fleming, Louvain, 1667.

this I am not unaware that there are many causes in this busy world full of sharp controversy which do not allow of a full investigation of this kind of thing; I have spoken, not because I believe [the accusations], but because steps must be taken now. If any of the bishops of your province are opposed to the truth, let the fault be exclusively theirs; for a mouth that is full of flour or other similar material cannot blow upon fire, for everything suffers from the presence of its opposite. Therefore I pray you for Christ's sake, come to the rescue of your good name which is torn to pieces among the people, lest by your enemies your further silence should be attributed to your betrayal of your trust. Do not forbear any longer, do not be silent, but rather send forth the cry of the true shepherd which the sheep recognise, while they do not hear the voice of the stranger but fly from him.

I urge you, my fathers and my own superiors, to drive away confusion from the faces of your sons and disciples who are put to shame on your account; and what is more than this, that the mist of suspicion be removed from the chair of Peter. Call therefore together a Council, that you may clear yourselves of the charges brought against you; for it is no trifling matter that you are accused of; for it is the reception of heretics, as I hear, that you are accused of; God forbid it should be thought to have happened, should be now or in the future.

haec dicens, non nescio multas esse causas in multitudine clamosa et acuta [et] tumultuosa, quae non permittunt haec ad purum usque investigare: non quia crederem, sed quia nunc fieri debeant, dixi. Si qui sunt rebelles contra veritatem vestri comprovinciales, tantum culpa includat hos; non enim ignem flare potest os farina aut alia materia plenum: omnis enim res laeditur vicina contrarietate; idcirco precor vos pro Christo: subvenite famae vestrae, quae laceratur inter gentes, ne perfidiae vestrae reputetur ab aemulis, si amplius taceatis. Nolite itaque amplius dissimulare, nolite tacere; sed potius emittite vocem veri pastoris, quam agnoscunt suae oves, 'quae alienorum vocem non audiunt, sed fugiunt ab eo.'

Ego instigo vos, meos patres ac proprios patronos, ad depellendam confusionem de facie filiorum vestrorum ac discipulorum, qui pro vobis confunduntur, et, quod his maius est, ut caligo suspicionis tollatur de cathedra sancti Petri. Inde conventum coge, ut ea, quae vobis obiciuntur, purgetis; non enim lusus currus vobis obicitur. Hereticorum enim receptio, ut audio, vobis reputatur, quod absit, credi verum fuisse, esse vel fore.

They say that Eutyches, Nestorius, Dioscorus, heretics of former days, as we know, were received by Vigilius, in what I think was the fifth synod. Behold the reason of the whole scandal, as they put it; if you also have received heretics, as is said, or if you know that Vigilius himself at his death was infected with this same error, why do you quote him against your own conscience? For everything which is not according to faith is a sin. Now it is your fault, if you have strayed from loyalty and 'rendered vain your first faith'; rightly do your juniors resist you and rightly do they not communicate with you; until the memory of what has been lost be destroyed and forgotten.

Dicunt enim Eutychen, Nestorium, Dioscorum antiquos, ut scimus, hereticos a Vigilio in synodo nescio quam in quinta receptos fuisse. Ecce causam totius, ut aiunt, scandali; si et vos sic recepistis, ut dicitur, aut si et ipsum Vigilium scitis sic infectum defunctum fuisse, quare illum contra conscientiam recitatis? 'Omne enim, quod non ex fide, peccatum est.' Iam vestra culpa est, si vos deviastis de vera fiducia et 'primam fidem irritam fecistis'; merito vestri iuniores vobis resistunt et merito vobiscum non communicant, donec perditorum memoria deleatur et oblivioni tradatur.

For if these things are true rather than imaginary, your subordinates, reversing the order of nature, have become the head and you the tail; it makes one indignant that such a thing should even be hinted at. Therefore they who have always kept the orthodox faith, whosoever they may be, even if they seem your juniors will also be your judges; for they are the orthodox and true catholics since they have neither received nor defended any heretics or suspects, but remained zealous for the true faith.

Si enim haec certa magis quam fabulosa sunt, versa vice filii vestri in caput conversi sunt, vos vero in caudam, quod etiam dici dolor est: ideo et vestri iudices erunt, qui semper orthodoxam fidem servaverunt, quicumque illi fuerint, etiamsi iuniores vestri videantur; ipsi autem orthodoxi et veri catholici, quoniam neque hereticos neque suspectos aliquos aliquando receperunt neque defenderunt, sed in zelo verae fidei permanserunt.

If therefore they too are not in such a position as to rightly judge those who are their seniors in rank but are nevertheless more guilty, you should, then, eagerly ask pardon, each side of the other, for such long drawn out disunion; neither side should

Si igitur et isti non tales sunt, ut seniores ordine, culpa tamen maiores iuste iudicent, certatim invicem veniam pro tam longa discordia postulantes et utrique

make an unreasonable defence, you of heretics, they of suspects. In this way you must with all speed put an end to a quarrel, both parties to which have been in the wrong.

But pardon me if I have said anything that might offend pious ears in dealing with such difficult topics, for the proper sequence of reasoning does not permit me to pass over any part of the question, and the freedom of our ancestral custom, if I may say so, partly emboldens me.

With us it is not persons that count but reason; moreover a love of evangelical peace compels me to speak my whole mind, that amazement may seize you both, who ought to be one body, at the greatness of my anxiety for your concord and peace; for if one member suffers all members suffer with it. For we indeed, as I have already said, are bound to the chair of St. Peter; for although Rome in itself is great and illustrious, it is through this chair only that it is great and illustrious among us.[1]

Although the name of that

nullum contra rationem defendentes—nec vos hereticos neque illi suspectos—quo utrique culpabiles celerius concordate.

Sed indulgete mihi talia confragosa loca tractanti, si qua forinsecus verba aures pias offenderunt quia consequentiae ratio historicae nihil me de quaestione praeterire permittit, et libertas paternae consuetudinis, ut ita dicam, me audere ex parte facit.

Non enim apud nos persona, sed ratio valet: amor autem pacis evangelicae totum me dicere cogit, ut vobis sit stupor ambobus, qui unus chorus esse debuistis, [et] magnitudo sollicitudinis meae pro concordia et pace vestra: 'si enim patitur unum membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra.' Nos enim, ut ante dixi, devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri: licet enim Roma magna est et vulgata, per istam cathedram tantum apud nos est magna et clara.

Quamquam enim Ausonici de-

[1] This statement shows that opinion in the sixth century agreed with the criticism of Grisar that 'it is entirely false to insinuate, as has been done, that the Bishops of Rome derived their spiritual authority merely from the external circumstances of their See.' *Rome and the Popes in the Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 316. Marsilius of Padua († 1342) was the first writer to assert that Papal authority was a mere accident due to association of the Papal government with the former rule and prestige of the Roman Empire. The suggestion was adopted by the polemical historians of the sixteenth century and is still given an unjustifiable prominence in many historical textbooks. In books written in sectarian interests the suggestion appears with the status of a well-known fact. 'There is no shadow of doubt touching this matter,' so writes Mr. L. H. Jordan in *Study of Religion in the Italian Universities*, Jordan and Labanca, Oxford University Press, 1909. See also W. S. Muntz, *St. Paul and the Early Church*, London, 1913, p. 221.

city of glorious Italy, founded of old, has been spread far and wide as something most venerable and far removed from the common world of seasonal change, with immense acclamation of almost all the peoples, throughout the whole world even to our western regions at the end of the earth, reaching, to speak in hyperbole, through the waves of the sea that surge triumphantly on all sides, yet wonderful to relate do not hinder it, yet from that time when God deigned to be also the Son of God, and of the Spirit of God riding on those two most ardent steeds, namely the apostles Peter and Paul, whose beloved descendants have made you rejoice, through the sea of the heathen nations, disturbed many waters and added to the team thousands of innumerable peoples; the chief charioteer of that race, who is Christ, the true father, the charioteer of Israel, across flowing straits, over the backs of dolphins, over the swelling wave has reached even unto us.

coris, acsi augustissimum quiddam ac aetheris procul seiunctum climatibus promiscuis, urbis quondam conditae nomen nimio favore omnium prope gentium, totum per orbem usque in occidua transmundialis limitis loca, triumphalibus saltuatim, licet hyperbolice, pelagi vorticibus undique consurgentibus, mirum dictu non prohibentibus, longe lateque vulgatum est, ex eo tamen tempore, quo Deus et Dei filius esse dignatus est, ac in duobus illis ferventissimis Dei spiritus equis, Petro videlicet et Paulo apostolis, quorum cara pignora vos felices fecerunt,[1] per mare gentium equitans turbavit aquas multas et innumerabilium populorum millibus multiplicavit quadrigas: supremus ipse auriga currus illius, qui est Christus, pater verus, agitator Israel, trans euriporum rheuma, trans delfinum dorsa, trans turgescentem dodrantem ad nos usque pervenit.

From that time you are great and noble, and Rome itself is more noble and more renowned; and if one may put it so, through the twin apostles of Christ, I mean those heavens described by the Holy Spirit as telling the glory of God—of whom it is said 'Their voice has gone out over the whole earth and their words to the end of the earth'—you are almost celestial, and Rome is the head of the churches of the whole world, saving the special prerogative of the place of the Lord's resurrection. There-

Ex tunc vos magni estis et clari, et Roma ipsa nobilior et clarior est; et, si dici potest, propter Christi geminos apostolos—dico ipsos caelos a spiritu sancto dictos, Dei gloriam enarrantes, de quibus infertur: 'in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum'—vos prope caelestes estis, et Roma orbis terrarum caput est ecclesiarum, salva loci dominicae resurrectionis singulari praerogativa.

[1] These words may perhaps mean 'whose precious relics you have the happiness of possessing.'

fore as your honour is great in proportion to the dignity of your chair, so you must be careful not to lose your dignity by any misuse of your power. For so long will authority remain with you as correct conduct prevails; for he is the true keybearer of the kingdom of heaven who through true knowledge opens to the worthy and closes to the unworthy; otherwise, if he should act wrongly he will be able neither to open or shut.

Since these things therefore are true and maintained without any contradiction by all who love the truth, and although it is known to everyone how our Saviour gave to St. Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven,—and perhaps it is this source of pride makes you claim beyond others a certain superior authority and power in divine things—; know that your power will be less in the sight of the Lord, if even in your hearts you have this thought; because it is the unity of faith that throughout the whole world created unity of power and prerogative; so that all men everywhere give *carte blanche* to the truth, and the approach to error in the same way is denied by all. Since a sincere confession of the faith gave the privilege even to the holy keybearer, to the common patron of us all, it may be allowed even to your juniors to make representations to you out of zeal for the faith, for love of peace, for the unity of the church, our common mother, who after the manner of Rebecca is internally torn, and grieves for the strife and intestine war between her children, and bewails in

Et ideo sicut magnus honor vester est pro dignitate cathedrae, ita magna cura vobis necessaria est, ut non perdatis vestram dignitatem propter aliquam perversitatem. Tam diu enim potestas apud vos erit, quamdiu recta ratio permanserit: ille enim certus regni caelorum clavicularius est, qui dignis per veram scientiam aperit et indignis claudit; alioquin si contraria fecerit, nec aperire nec claudere poterit.

Cum haec igitur vera sint et sine ulla contradictione ab omnibus vera sapientibus recepta sint, licet omnibus notum est et nemo qui nesciat, qualiter salvator noster sancto Petro regni caelorum contulit claves, et vos per hoc forte superciliosum, nescio quid prae ceteris vobis maioris auctoritatis ac in divinis rebus potestatis vindicatis: noveritis minorem fore potestatem vestram apud Dominum, si vel cogitetis hoc in cordibus vestris, quia unitas fidei in toto orbe unitatem fecit potestatis et praerogativae; ita ut libertas veritati ubique ab omnibus detur, et aditus errori ab omnibus similiter abnegetur, quia confessio recta etiam sancto privilegium dedit clavicularium, communi omnium nonno, liceat etiam iunioribus vestris sollicitare vos pro zelo fidei, pro amore pacis, pro ecclesiae unitate communis matris, quae nimirum intra viscera more Rebeccae discerpitur materna et dolet pro rixa ac intestino bello filiorum suorum et

sadness internal disorder. Here we have more need of tears than of words.

How successful has been the enemy of the Christian name, after the living words of the Son of God, the fulness of the gospels, apostolic doctrine, the recent writings of orthodox writers who in various ways have unfolded the sacraments of the faith from the Old and New Testaments. In dividing the body of Christ, separating His members, and in rending the very garment of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, what unity is there! Thine is the cunning, Satan, but may Christ 'our peace who made both one' overcome thee.

Therefore, beloved, speedily agree and meet together and do not quarrel over ancient contentions, but rather be silent, and commit these quarrels into everlasting silence and forgetfulness, and if there be anything doubtful, leave it to the divine judgment; but those points which are clear and about which men can judge, decide justly without favour to individuals, and let your judgment be peaceful in your gates, and recognise each other, that there may be joy in heaven and on earth because of your peace and unity.

What else have you to do if you are both true Christians but protect the Catholic faith; for I cannot see how Christian can contend with Christian about the faith; whatever is said by the orthodox Christian who truly glorifies the Lord, the other will answer 'Amen,' since he himself has the same love and faith.

moesta luget divisionem viscerum suorum. Lacrimis in his opus est magis, quam verbis.

Quomodo praevaluit inimicus christiani nominis post filii Dei viva verba, post evangeliorum plenitudinem, post apostolicam doctrinam, post neotericam orthodoxorum auctorum scripturam, qui de Novo ac Veteri [Testamento] sacramenta fidei diverso sermone aperuerunt! Corpus Christi dividere et membra separare et ipsius filii Dei, salvatoris mundi, tunicam scindere, que est unitas! Tuum est hoc artificium, diabole, quem Christus, 'pax nostra, qui fecit utraque unum,' vincat.

Ideo cito, carissimi, concordate et convenite in unum et nolite contendere pro antiquis litibus, sed magis tacete et aeterno silentio ac oblivioni eas tradite; et si qua dubia sunt, divino iudicio reservate; quae autem manifesta sunt, de quibus homines iudicare possunt, iuste | 'sine acceptione personarum' iudicate, sitque iudicium pacificum in portis vestris, et agnoscite vos invicem, ut sit gaudium in caelo et in terra pro pace et coniunctione vestra.

Quid vobis aliud defendere praeter fidem catholicam, si veri christiani estis utrique? Non enim ego possum scire, unde christianus contra christianum de fide possit contendere; sed quidquid dixerit orthodoxus christianus, qui recte Dominum glorificat, respondebit alter: Amen, quia et ille similiter amat et

Let you all therefore say the same thing, and all think the same thing, and so be one, all of you Christians.

For if, as I have heard, there are some who do not believe there are two substances in Christ, they are to be regarded as heretics rather than as Christians. For Christ, our Saviour, true God from all eternity, outside time, is true man in time, without sin, who in virtue of His divinity is co-eternal with the Father, and according to His humanity younger than His mother. Who was born in the flesh but in no wise left heaven; dwelling in the Trinity, lived in the world; and therefore if it has been written in the fifth synod, as someone has told me, that he who adores two substances, offers a divided prayer, he who thus wrote is divided from the saints and separated from God. For we believe one Christ in personal unity in which it pleased the fulness of the Divinity to dwell corporeally, His Divinity and Humanity, because He who descended He it is Who ascended above all the heavens, that He might fulfil all things. If anyone believe otherwise of the Incarnation of the Lord, he is an enemy of the faith and to be held in abomination by all Christians, and excommunicated, of whatever order or state or degree he may be; for no one should honour man to the injury of God; therefore I beseech you for Christ's sake, spare no one who shall attempt to separate you from Christ, but rather resist anyone to the face who, unwilling to accept the credit. Unum itaque omnes dicite et unum sentite, ut utrique unum sitis, toti christiani.

Nam si, ut audivi, aliqui in Christo duas substantias non credunt, heretici potius, quam christiani credendi sunt; Christus enim salvator noster verus Deus aeternus sine tempore et verus homo absque peccato ex tempore est, qui iuxta divinitatem coaeternus est patri et iuxta humanitatem iunior est matre. Qui natus in carne, nequaquam deerat caelo; manens in trinitate, vixit in mundo; et ideo, si scriptum est in quinta synodo, ut quidam mihi dixit, quod, qui duas substantias adorat, orationem suam divisam habeat, ille divisus est a sanctis et separatus est a Deo, qui scripsit. Nam nos pro unitate personae, in qua complacuit plenitudinem divinitatis inhabitare corporaliter, unum Christum credimus, divinitatem eius et humanitatem, quia 'qui descendit ipse est, qui ascendit super omnes caelos, ut adimpleret omnia.' Si quis aliter de incarnatione Domini senserit, hostis est fidei et abominandus est omnibus christianis ac anathematizandus, cuiuscumque ordinis aut status aut gradus fuerit; nullus enim ad iniuriam Dei hominem honorare debet; ideo, quaeso vos pro Christo, nulli parcite, qui vos a Christo separare tentaverit; sed potius ei in faciem resistite, si quis, nolens recte credere, vos a fide catholica revocare voluerit.

truth, should wish to draw you away from the Catholic faith.

Pardon me, I beseech you, for my insulting and harsh language, a wordy nobody who could not write otherwise on such matters. For while I wished in all things to bow before the truth, not forgetting that the unleavened bread should be eaten with bitterness, to God alone I have given heed who is blessed for ever. I have proved my orthodoxy (?) and my zeal for the faith in choosing to court censure rather than in such a matter not open my mouth, unlearned though it be.

Wherefore, although the three-tongued scorpion with curving weapon arises in those persons, of whom it is written 'he extends his tongue like the bow of falsehood,' who judge all things to be new though they are obsolete,

[passage corrupt]; yet when the pagan Lombard King requests a dull Irish stranger to take up his pen, when there is a backflow of the waters of an ancient stream, who will not express astonishment rather than blame?

I nevertheless shall not tremble, nor in the cause of God fear the tongues of men who more frequently lie than tell the truth; and when there is stern necessity diffidence must be resisted rather than indolence encouraged.

Therefore to return to the point from which I have digressed, I ask you that since many are

Date, quaeso, veniam mihi nimis iniurioso asperoque, cuidam loquaci, qui de tali causa aliter scribere non potui. Dum enim veritati per omnia placere volui, azyma cum amaritudine non nesciens comedenda, soli Deo servivi, qui est benedictus in saecula. Ego germanitatem meam probavi et zelum fidei meae, dum malui reprehensoribus locum dare, quam in tali causa os quamvis ineruditum non aperire.

Idcirco quamvis trisulcus arcuato vulnere scorpius insurgat in his, de quibus scriptum est, 'extendere linguam suam sicut arcum mendacii,' qui nova quaeque licet epicroca iudicant, coppes nimirum effecti hyperbolice, quique oliginosis celetes praealearibus, scriptis quibusque non lepidis invidae refragationis semper opponunt peltas; sed quando rex gentilis peregrinum scribere Langobardus Scotum hebetem rogat, quando unda torrentis antiqui retro redundat, quis non mirabitur potius quam calumniabitur?

Ego tamen non trepidabo neque in causa Dei linguas hominum formidabo, qui frequentius mentiantur quam vera loquantur, cum potius verecundiae resistendum quam ignaviae subiciendum sit, ubi necessitas cogat.

Igitur, ut ad id loci regrediar, unde digressus sum, rogo vos, quia multi dubitant de fidei

doubtful of the purity of your faith, that you may speedily remove this blemish on the fair name of the holy See; for this rumour of inconstancy does not become the dignity of the Roman church, the suspicion that is, that it can be moved by any violence from the solid foundation of the true faith for which so many martyrs have shed their blood, preferring to die rather than abandon their loyalty. For if in our time were to come the final persecution of that hateful scaly one whose hide scarcely all the ships in the world will be able to carry, shall we not resist unto blood fighting against sin as our fathers did before us, I mean the apostles and so many martyrs? If persecution in the early ages of faith was severe, how much more so will it be in the end of which the Lord says 'Thinkest thou that the Son of Man when he cometh shall find faith upon the earth?' and again 'Unless those days had been shortened no flesh would have been saved.' Happy is he whom death shall first take away before he weakly denies the faith.

He says nevertheless that the elect will be there of whom He, as you know, prophesied to His disciples 'Behold I am with you all days even to the end of the world.'

As therefore they that are to be chosen shall endure in those more dangerous and incomparable days of old as in the future, by the power of the Lord, greater sufferings, why should not we, in times safer still and more secure, endure by the help of vestrae puritate, ut cito tollatis hunc naevum de sanctae cathedrae claritate; non enim decet Romanae ecclesiae gravitatem haec inconstantis levitatis fama, ut qualibet vi possit moveri a soliditate verae fidei, pro qua tot martyres suum sanguinem fuderunt, malentes mori quam convelli. Numquid enim, si in nostris temporibus persecutio venerit ultima squammae illius invisae, cuius corium vix universae naves poterunt portare, non usque ad sanguinem resistemus adversus peccatum repugnando, sicut patres nostri fecerunt, apostolos dico et tot martyres? Si gravis fuit persecutio in initio fidei, quanto magis in fine, de quo Dominus dicit: 'Putasne veniens filius hominis inveniat fidem in terra?' et iterum: 'Nisi breviati fuissent dies illi, non fieret omnis caro salva.' Felix, quem mors ante tollat, quam infirmus neget! Dicit tamen electos ibi futuros, de quibus nimirum praedixit discipulis suis: 'Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi.' Cum itaque electi futuri in diebus illis periculosioribus ceteris ante etiam ac retro incomparabilibus sustinebunt, Domino roborante, maiora: cur nos in tutioribus adhuc ac securioribus vel pro fide nostra, qua ethnicis

God, lesser evils for our faith, whereby we are distinguished from pagans and Jews and heretics? But I urge this course with but a feeble gesture, relying on speech rather than on violence, in keeping with my name. I, known in Hebrew as Jonah, in Greek as Peristera, in Latin Columba, use rather a name common to your tongue, though I bear a name identical with that of Jonah and was all but shipwrecked like him too. As I have often done already, I now again ask for your forbearance, for I am driven to address you not from vanity but from a feeling that the matter is urgent.

For someone wrote me a letter just on my hurried arrival in this country and gave me to understand that I must be on my guard against you as having fallen into the sect of Nestorius. I was amazed and, although I did not believe his accusation, yet in order not to do anything that might make it difficult to get at the truth, I made such brief reply as I could, keeping in view both what he had written and the opinion I myself have formed of you—for I believe that the column of the church is always solid in Rome. This I have had sent you to read and to challenge any points in it when I am in the wrong; for I do not dare to profess myself to be one of those who are free from error.

And after, in addition to this reason for my writing, came the order of King Agilulph whose request threw me into a state of amazement and manifold anxiety; for indeed that which

ac iudaeis ac hereticis differimus, non sustinebimus, Domino adiuvante, minora?

Sed talia suadenti, utpote torpenti actu, ac dicenti potius, quam facienti mihi Ionae hebraice, Peristerae graece, Columbae latine, potius tantum vestrae idiomate linguae nuncupato, licet prisco utor hebraeo nomine, cuius et pene naufragium subivi, veniam, quaeso, sicut saepe rogavi, date, quia necessitate magis, quam cenodoxia scribere coactus sum, dum quidam litteris suis, quibus me primo pene ingressu in huius regionis terminos arripuit, vos mihi cavendos, tamquam in Nestorii sectam decidentes, significavit. Cui attonitus respondi in brevi, ut potui, non credens suae allegationi; sed ne ullo modo veritati essem contrarius, iuxta suam epistolam et iuxta meam bonam de vobis existimationem, —ego enim credo semper columnam ecclesiae firmam esse in Roma—responsum variavi, quod vobis direxi relegendum ac concertandum, sicubi contra veritatem venit; non enim me inter irreprehensibiles profiteri audeo.

Post hanc autem scribendi occasionem insuper regis insistit iussio Agilulfi, cuius postulatio me in stuporem ac sollicitudinem posuit multiplicem: quippe quia

I see is, I think, not far from miraculous. For the sovereigns have supported in this country, for a long time past, that scourge of Arianism, and trampled upon the Catholic Faith; now they desire that our Faith be strengthened.

Perhaps Christ, from whom all good is engendered, now looks upon us favourably; we are indeed to be pitied if further scandal should come from act of ours. The King asks you, the Queen and all implore you, that as soon as possible unity may come, that there may soon be peace of faith as there is political peace; that henceforth the whole flock of Christ may be one. O King of Kings, do thou follow Peter, and let the whole church follow thee.

What is sweeter than peace obtained through war? What more pleasant than the reunion of brethren long separated? How cheering is the sight of a father returning after long years away? How welcome the news of a son's arrival to a long-waiting mother.

So to God the Father the peace of his children will be a joy for all eternity, and the gladness of the church, our mother, a rejoicing for ever. And now, holy Father and brethren, pray for me a most contemptible sinner, and for my fellow travellers, at the Holy Places and before the ashes of the saints, and especially (at the shrines of) SS. Peter and Paul, who alike were leaders of the great King, and stout fighters on a victorious field, following our crucified Lord by the shedding of their blood; that we may deserve to adhere to Christ and be pleasing to Him, and offer

non sine miraculo reor esse, quod video. Reges namque Arianam hanc cladem in hac diu regione, calcando fidem catholicam, firmarunt; nunc nostram rogant fidem roborari.

Forte Christus pie nunc nos respicit, cuius favore omne nascitur bonum. Nos valde miseri sumus, si nostra de parte scandalum amplius fiat. Rogat itaque rex rogatque regina, rogant te toti, ut, quam celerrime possit fieri, fiant omnia unum, fiat ut patriae pax, pax fiat mox fidei, ut toti deinceps grex unus Christi fiat. Rex regum, tu Petrum, te tota sequatur ecclesia.

Quid suavius pace per bella? Quid dulcius coniunctione fratrum diu separatorum? Quam alacer annos supervenit pater post multos? Quam suave diu expectanti matri narratur adventus?

Ita Deo patri pax filiorum gaudium erit in aevum saeculorum, et laetitia ecclesiae matris tripudium fiet sempiternitatis. De cetero, sancte papa et fratres, orate pro me, vilissimo peccatore, et meis comperegrinis iuxta loca sancta et sanctorum cineres et praecipue iuxta Petrum et Paulum, viros similiter et magnos magni regis duces ac fortissimos campi felicissimi bellatores dominum crucifixum cum cruore sequentes, ut mereamur Christo haerere, placere, gratias agere

Him our thanksgiving, and with you and all the saints, praise Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost now and for ever. Amen.	eumque cum patre et spiritu sancto sine fine laudare vobiscum, omnibus sanctis hic et in aeterna saecula saeculorum. Amen.

The havoc historians have made of this letter has been illustrated in the above chapters by many instances taken from the works of well-known writers, and I will conclude here with two more quotations to emphasise once again the fact that these historians did not study the text but took on trust, from each other, what they delivered to the public as the fruit of their own research.

F. E. Warren, Introduction to *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, Oxford, 1881, p. 38.	W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, Edin. 1877, vol. ii. p. 11.
'The position assumed by Columbanus, writing on the Continent to the Pope, substantially amounted to this: an acknowledgement of the Bishop of Rome as a true bishop of the Church of Christ, and of the need of courteous language in addressing the occupant of so distinguished a See, with, throughout, an implied assertion of exemption from his jurisdiction, and a claim to be allowed to criticise freely, and from the standpoint of an equal [pedisequus vester!] the character and conduct of any Roman pontiff.'	The position which Columbanus took up was substantially this—'Your jurisdiction as Bishop of Rome does not extend beyond the limits of the Roman empire. I am a missionary from a church of God among the Barbarians, and, though temporarily within the limits of your territorial jurisdiction, and bound to regard you with respect and deference, I claim the right to follow the customs of my own church handed down to us by our fathers.'

APPENDIX II.

NESCIO QUO RITU BARBARO.

THE suggestion, first put forward prominently by W. F. Skene, that in the time of Queen Margaret, Mass in the Scottish Church was celebrated in Gaelic, has been too hastily accepted by many modern historians.

The only information we have on this point is contained in the *Life of Queen Margaret*, attributed to Turgot (1070–1089):

'Praeterea in aliquibus locis Scottorum quidam fuerunt, qui contra totius Ecclesiae consuetudinem, nescio quo ritu barbaro, missas celebrare consueverant; quod regina, zelo Dei accensa, ita destruere atque annihilare studuit, ut deinceps qui tale quid praesumeret, nemo in tota Scottorum gente appareret.' [1]

Into this passage Skene read far more than it contains. He asserted that the most probable explanation of 'nescio quo ritu barbaro' is that 'in the remote and mountainous districts the service was performed in the native language and not in Latin, as was the custom of the universal church.' [2] This explanation has been accepted, without any hesitation, by most compilers of modern historical textbooks.

In the brief reference to this question made in a well-known French compendium of general history, the influence of Skene is obvious:

'Le culte se faisait en langue vulgaire, non en latin.' [3]

Bellesheim likewise accepts the same suggestion without comment:

'What these barbarous rites were we are not told, but the allusion is not improbably to the use of the native language in the celebration of Mass instead of Latin.' [4]

Professor Rait, following Skene, but with a note of caution, writes that 'possibly, in remote districts, Mass was said in Gaelic.' [5]

In most of the compilations put together by modern Scottish ecclesiastical writers the speculation of Skene has been promoted to the status of a well-known fact:

'The clerics in many cases knew no other language than Gaelic, and used Gaelic in the services of the Church.' [6]

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 1873), vol. ii. part 1, p. 158.

[2] W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland* (Edin., 1877), vol. ii. p. 349.

[3] Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale du ive siècle à nos jours* (Paris), 12 vols., 1893, vol. i. p. 156.

[4] Bellesheim (*Gesch. d. kathol. Kirche in Schottland*, Mainz, 1883), *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland* (tr. Hunter Blair, Edin., 1887), vol. i. p. 249.

[5] Rait, *Scotland*, London, 1911, p. 16.

[6] R. L. Mackie, M.A., *Scotland* (London, 1916), p. 60.

Mr. Archibald Scott prefers the conjecture of Skene to the evidence of the contemporary document:

'The early Roman Catholic writers have done much to discredit the *Cele De* by their references to "barbarous rites," giving the impression that Paganism had somehow mingled with Pictish Christianity; whereas it was not the rites that were "barbarous," but their celebration in the native Celtic speech, which was "barbarous" only to those who affected the Latin tongue, or who held the belief that culture and religion were inseparable from Latin.' [1]

In Skene's treatment of this question, and in the development and extension of his theory by the above-quoted writers, we have examples of the careless historical method so frequently adopted by historians who attempt that most difficult task, the writing of history for the popular taste. Such writers, rather than stick to the documents, prefer to entertain their readers with a paraphrase. The paraphrase in a short time acquires a pedigree; it is repeatedly copied without reference to the text; various improvements will be made by successive compilers who get further and further away from the original document. Finally, the paraphrase becomes an interpretation, and as such, if the first interpreter has a reputation for scholarship, will henceforward be regarded as authoritative by the busy men who have no time to consult even the most accessible documents.

The interpretation of the passage in question given by Skene is defective at every point.

The words 'remote and mountainous districts' are an unjustifiable extension of 'in aliquibus locis'; 'the service was performed' is an inadequate translation of 'missas celebrare consueverant'; and 'in the native tongue' for 'ritu barbaro' is an effort of the imagination against all meaning those words convey.

'Nescio quo' must refer to something not exactly known, or not easily explained, or not worth while explaining. Surely if the custom had simply been that Mass was said in Gaelic, then the author of the 'Life' would have said so outright.

But in that case he could not have used the word 'ritus,' for rite has almost nothing to do with language.

Thus among the Melkhite Uniates, who observe the Byzantine rite, Arabic, now the vernacular tongue in Syria, has taken the place of Syriac; in Dalmatia the Roman rite has been used in

[1] Archibald Scott, *The Pictish Nation, etc., etc.* (Edin., 1918), p. 513.

Slavonic since the eleventh century; and in Rome Mass, according to the Roman rite, is still sometimes said in Greek.

> 'Language is no test of a rite. The only real test of a rite is its order, forms, and arrangements. . . . If people would only realise this there would be less confusion of ideas on the subject.'[1]

The adjective 'barbarus' is also adverse to Skene's theory. The meaning here, I suppose, is simply strange and not barbarous in the sense of outrageous. That Mass should be said in Gaelic is not 'strange and contrary to the custom of the whole church,' for the Roman Church has recognised at least nine official liturgical languages: Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, Slavonic, Georgian, Rumanian.

The author of the 'Life' must have known that languages other than Latin were in use for liturgical services, including the Mass, not only in the East, but also within the Latin Patriarchate. If, therefore, the Celts had a custom of saying Mass in Gaelic, it might have seemed strange or even barbarous to a Saxon observer; but a cleric could not have described such a custom as contrary to the universal use of the whole Church.[2]

If the words 'nescio quo ritu barbaro' are to be allowed their natural meaning, then they may perhaps be taken to refer either to some corruption of rite, or to a survival among the Celts of a primitive Gallican form, elsewhere forgotten.

Until further evidence has been obtained, speculation as to the character of the custom condemned by Queen Margaret is not likely to lead to any probable conclusion, but that Skene has given a wrong answer to this problem, and that he has led astray subsequent historians, is, I think, quite certain.

[1] Adrian Fortescue, *The Uniate Eastern Churches* (London, 1923), p. 20.

[2] The suggestion has been made, on insufficient grounds, that there may be some link between this custom condemned by Queen Margaret and a reference to the Culdees given in the Register of St. Andrews (1144–53):

> 'Kelidei namque in angulo quodam ecclesiae, quae modica nimis erat, suum officium more suo celebrabant' (Haddan and Stubbs, *op. cit.* p. 180).

That 'more suo' means 'in the vernacular' is clearly inadmissible. The passage contains no liturgical information, and the reference 'in angulo quodam' is unintelligible.

APPENDIX III

QUEEN BRUNHILDA AND HER GRANDSONS

THE charge against Brunhilda of encouraging the immorality of her grandsons is based on an assertion made by her enemy Jonas :

'Verebatur enim ne si, abjectis concubinis, reginam aulae praefecisset, [Theodericus] dignitatis atque honoris suae modum amputasset.' Vita Columbani. M.G.H., Scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum, iv. p. 86.

Historians almost without exception have accepted the statement of Jonas as final. The work of Godefroid Kurth has, however, not been entirely without effect upon recent historical work, even of a popular character. I am glad to find that his article in the *Revue des Questions Historiques* of 1891 is familiar to the author of a 'Life of St. Columbanus,' Dublin, 1915. Mrs. Concannon writes as follows :

'The character of Brunechildis is one of the problems of history, and it is but fair to consider that Jonas, who only remembered her with passionate resentment as the opponent and enemy of his hero Columban, is not the man to do her justice. But so far as one can see, there is no answer to the charges he makes against her of looking on unmoved while her grandson was being corrupted' (p. 168).

If Mrs. Concannon will look again at what Kurth has written she will find that he has given a complete answer to the charges made by Jonas.

Situations that cannot be helped have sometimes to be tolerated. But the point made by Jonas (and herein if it were true would lie the guilt of the Queen) is that she approved of and encouraged the situation.

A charge of this kind, where there is no first-hand witness, must be decided by the character of the accused and by the sufficiency of the motive alleged.

The past history of the Queen, as Kurth has shown and as Mrs. Concannon agrees, makes the accusation unexpected ; the motive assigned by Jonas makes it highly improbable.

In a case where the verdict must depend upon the acceptance or rejection of motives imputed, the modern historian has advantage over a sub-contemporary such as Jonas, who was simply concerned to write a panegyric of his hero. It is of course the business of hagiography to set out the virtues of a saint against the background of a dark and wicked world.

As counsel for the defence, too long belated, Kurth has summed up the whole question in words which seem to me convincing and final:

'Qu'elle ait toléré chez ses fils, et spécialement chez Thierry, des mœurs déréglées qui lui furent reprochées par les saints, c'est fort possible, mais tous les princes mérovingiens n'ont-ils pas eu les mêmes mœurs, et est-ce à l'influence de leurs mères qu'il faut attribuer ce qui est le fait de leur tempérament barbare ?

'Soutiendra-t-on sérieusement qu'un roi voluptueux subit plus volontiers l'influence de sa femme que de sa maîtresse ? Prétendra-t-on que, pour être du sang royal, une reine aura d'autant plus d'ascendant sur le cœur de son époux ?

'L'histoire donne d'étranges démentis à cette manière de voir. Ce n'est pas la naissance, ce sont les charmes personnels qui assurent l'influence des femmes sur leurs maris, et à ce compte, pourquoi Brunehaut aurait-elle redouté une fille de roi plutôt qu'une esclave ? Avait-elle oublié cette fille de roi qui, à peine installée sous le toit conjugal, y avait souffert tant de maux de la part d'une concubine, laquelle parvint finalement à la faire périr et à se mettre à sa place ?

'Elle aurait eu peu de mémoire dans ce cas, puisque cette fille de roi, c'était sa propre sœur Galeswinte, et cette servante, c'était son implacable rivale Frédégonde.'[1]

APPENDIX IV

SOME MISTRANSLATIONS OF THE WORD 'MISSA'

How a mistaken idea of patriotism obscured the study of history in Scotland even in the third quarter of the nineteenth century can only be fully realised by reading the popular historical literature of that period; an extract from the chapter on 'Gaelic Literature and Language,' contributed to a 'History of the Highland Clans' by the Rev. Thomas MacLauchlan, LL.D., F.S.A.S., will help to indicate its uncritical character.

'We have our doubts as to Ireland having furnished Scotland with its Gaelic population . . . a certain class of writers are at once prepared to allow that the Bobbio MSS. . . . are all Irish . . . and yet there is no evidence of such being the case . . . Columbanus, the founder of the Bobbio Institution, may have been an Irishman, but he may have gone from Iona.'[2]

[1] *Revue des Questions Historiques*, 1891, vol. 50, p. 55. Reprinted in *Études Franques*, Paris and Brussels, 1919, vol. i. pp. 322–323.

[2] *History of the Highland Clans*, Edinburgh, 1875, chapter xlv. p. 67.

The most interesting feature of this writer's work is not his ignorance of history or even his lack of the critical faculty, but his curious avoidance of the word 'monastery.'

The Rev. W. Alexander, who flourished in print between 1840 and 1850, and is one of the last of a long line to quote Flacius of Magdeburg fame as an authority on Church history, also wrote of the monastery of Iona as the 'Columban Institute.'

The suppression of inconvenient words is a dialectical device not confined to the polemical writers of Scottish Church history.

Bossuet drew attention to the fact that Protestant historians in the sixteenth century habitually juggled with the words 'sacrament' and 'sacrifice.'[1]

Most English ecclesiastical historians in the eighteenth century were careful to avoid a correct translation of the word 'missa' and generally employed some neutral phrase such as 'solemn act of religion,' 'act of devotion,' or simply 'sacrament.'[2]

In one of the most important documents of early Scottish history, the 'Life of Queen Margaret,' attributed to Turgot, there are four references to the celebration of Mass which have exercised the ingenuity of mistranslators.

Lord Hailes wrote in 1776 that the Scottish clergy in the time of Queen Margaret had ceased 'to celebrate the Communion of the Lord's Supper'; Dr. Rankine, many generations later, reversed the misstatement by saying that the ancient Scottish Church practised the 'regular celebration of the Lord's Supper'; and another modern writer (Boyd, 'Early Christian Scotland') cryptically observed that the Queen especially condemned 'the evil practice which had crept in of celebrating the Communion without anyone receiving it' (p. 63).

The motive behind all such evasions was admitted by the Rev. W. Alexander, who explained that the word 'Mass' had become

'so identified with the superstitions of Romanists that to employ it would mislead the reader . . . the sacrifice of the Mass was an innovation on the ancient Catholic Faith introduced by the Church of Rome towards the close of the thirteenth century.'

Ledwich, copying from Sibbald's 'History of Fife,' and in

[1] *Histoire des Variations*, Paris, 1697, vol. i. p. 200.

[2] Bridgett, *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain*, London, 1908. For mistranslations of the word 'missa' by Collier and Stillingfleet, see *The Month*, vol. lv. 1885.

agreement with Mosheim, dated the 'innovation' back to the sixth century:

'The office of the Celtic monks was very different from the Roman custom; we are quite sure it was not the Mass, which Pope Gregory (ep. 63, i. 7) confessed was the work of a private person and not of Apostolic authority.'

Mr. Stephen in his 'History of the Scottish Church' (1894) was able to write his 13th chapter, almost wholly concerned with the story of Queen Margaret, without using the word 'Mass,' although he quoted, in a footnote, the Latin words of her biographer 'missas celebrare'; in his text Mr. Stephen repeats the verb 'celebrare,' but omits the noun.

A determination to avoid using the word 'Mass' can be seen in the work of distinguished Scottish historians even in the present century. Dr. MacEwen in his 'History of the Church in Scotland,' chapter ix, 'Church Life and Worship,' translated 'missa' as 'Holy Communion Office.' The omissions of this important chapter are significant. While office, celebration, rite, and liturgy are mentioned with the utmost reverence, the word 'Mass' does not once occur (except in one footnote, and there with inverted commas).

Yet it would be impossible for anyone acquainted with the history of the fifth and sixth centuries to deny that belief in the dogma of the Real Presence was part of the faith of early Scottish Christianity.[1] Nor could anyone with a knowledge of the history of liturgy venture to deny that the 'missa' of Queen Margaret's time was identical in every essential point, and in nearly all unessential points, too, with the Catholic Mass of the present day.

It is certainly unhistorical to assert or suggest that there was in Scotland, at any time before the Reformation, a Communion service outside, apart from, or different from, the Mass.

[1] Clear evidence of this belief has survived in Sechnall's fifth-century hymn on the Holy Eucharist:

'Hoc sacramento
Corporis et Sanguinis
Omnes exuti
Ab inferni faucibus.'

The Antiphonary of Bangor, ed. F. E. Warren, 1893.

In translating these words, hymnologists, as Warren pointed out, have often resorted to the most ingenious evasions. J. W. Atkinson, in *Celtic Review*, vol. v. p. 110, has given a correct rendering of the whole hymn in English verse.

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